

## Wildland Fire Management: The National Fire Plan

### Background

In 2000, the President requested the Secretaries of the Departments of Agriculture and Interior to prepare a report recommending how to respond to severe, ongoing fire activity, reduce impacts of fires on rural communities and the environment, and ensure sufficient firefighting resources in the future. The report, *Managing the Impacts of Wildfire on Communities and the Environment: A Report to the President in Response to the Wildfires of 2000*, became the cornerstone of what is known as the National Fire Plan (Plan). Acting on Presidential and Congressional direction in 2001, the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior joined State governors and other partners in developing the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy and its subsequent Implementation Plan to further develop a coordinated strategy addressing the threats posed by wildland fire.

In August 2002, the President announced his Healthy Forests Initiative to implement core components of the National Fire Plan and the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy through a series of measures to reduce the adverse human and environmental impacts of wildland fire. This effort led to the enactment of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003. All the reports, guidance and legislative assistance are now in place or under development, incorporated under the concepts of the National Fire Plan, and reducing the devastation of severe wildland fire and improving the health of the Nation's forests and rangelands.

### Four Years of National Fire Plan Implementation

The Plan represents a commitment to help protect communities, natural resources, and most importantly, the lives of firefighters and the public. This commitment is shared among Federal agencies, States, local governments, Tribes, and other partners. Collaboration, priority setting, and accountability are the guiding principles that will ensure the continued success of the Plan.

Since the inception of the Plan, the five Federal wildland fire management agencies (the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service in the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Forest Service in the Department of Agriculture) have made significant progress in creating a seamless fire protection response. Congress has supported this effort by providing funds to: increase firefighting capabilities; reduce the amount of hazardous fuels with special emphasis on areas around communities; increase fire-related research; increase State and local fire prevention and firefighting programs; increase economic development through contracting; restore fire damaged lands; and improve accountability for the resources used in fighting wildland fires.

### Firefighting Challenges

In recent years, the Nation has endured extreme fire behavior on a multi-state scale, with fires burning record amounts of wildlands, significant numbers of homes, and natural resources. The combined effects of long-term drought, unprecedented levels of hazardous and volatile fuels,

numerous ignitions, and growing populations in the wildland urban interface (WUI) have resulted in increased fire complexity and record-breaking levels of fire activity.

Adverse weather patterns, large accumulations of hazardous fuels, and an increasing population living in or near wildlands combine to create a continuing danger and threat to communities and the environment. The Departments jointly spent over \$918.8 million suppressing fires that burned more than 8 million acres, 6.6 million of those acres in Alaska and 1.4 million acres in the lower 48 states. More than 314 primary residences were lost to wildfire. Most tragically, the fires of 2004 resulted in the fatalities of three firefighters who lost their lives while protecting homes, communities and our natural resources.

Even with the devastation of the last several years, the Federal wildland fire management agencies demonstrated the positive results of years of coordinating their suppression resources. Combined with State and local resources, the five agencies provided the public with an effective and seamless firefighting effort. Firefighters protected thousands of homes, businesses and other structures threatened by large fires. Of the more than 75,000 fires reported on public lands in 2004, only 587 escaped to become large fires covering 300 acres or more – a 99 percent success rate.

Ultimately, measures to reduce fuel buildup and protect communities provide the best long-term method of fighting wildland fires and their attendant costs. To this end, the agencies significantly reduced the risk associated with uncontrolled wildfires by treating hazardous fuels on over 4 million acres (3.1 million under the National Fire Plan), 2.2 million acres of which were in the WUI (1.8 million of these acres under the National Fire Plan). In addition, by using naturally occurring fire, the agencies reduced fuels on an estimated 125,000 acres in 2004.

## **10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan**

In 2001, the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior joined State governors and other partners in developing the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy. A broad collaborative group representing Federal agencies, States, local governments, conservation and commodity groups, and tribal interests, developed this long-term strategy to help implement the National Fire Plan. It is the first national long-term comprehensive strategy for wildland fire management.

The 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy and its Implementation Plan provide for long-term implementation of NFP objectives, the Healthy Forests Initiative, and expand the emphasis on a collaboration-based solution that includes input and support from many participants, including local, State, tribal governments, and non-governmental organizations. Key to the success of the Implementation Plan is early and frequent cooperation among all parties at the local level. By the end of 2004, 96 of the 168 actions items set forth in the plan were completed.

The four goals of the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy are:

- Improve fire prevention and suppression;
- Reduce hazardous fuels;
- Restore fire-adapted ecosystems; and
- Promote community assistance.

The three major principles which guided the development of the 10-Year Plan are:

- Priority setting that emphasizes the protection of communities and other high-priority watersheds at-risk;
- Collaboration among governments and broadly representative stakeholders; and
- Accountability through performance measures and monitoring for results.

## **Wildland Fire Leadership Council**

In April 2002, the Secretaries of the two Departments commissioned the Wildland Fire Leadership Council. Members are: the Under Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment at USDA; the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, and the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management at DOI; the Chief of the Forest Service; the Directors of the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Fish and Wildlife Service, Geological Survey and National Park Service; and representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Administration, Western Governors Association, National Association of Counties, National Association of State Foresters, and the Inter-Tribal Timber Council. The Council functions to ensure that Federal wildland fire policy is carried out in a unified, seamless manner. The Council meets three times a year to address numerous management activities. Consistent with the policies and actions contained within the President's 2006 Budget, the Council is dedicated to achieving consistent implementation of the goals, actions, and policies of the National Fire Plan, the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan, the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, the President's Healthy Forests Initiative, and the Healthy Forests Restoration Act.

The heads of the five wildland fire management agencies have resolved several key issues such as common performance measures, common fire cost accounting protocols, and seamless direction for an effective hazardous fuel reduction program. In 2004, WFLC commissioned a Strategic Issues Panel on Fire Suppression Costs to identify specific actions for cost containment. In 2005, WFLC is directing the agencies to implement the major recommendations from the Strategic Issues Panel report and is continuing to focus attention on management actions for cost containment on large fires.

## **2004 National Fire Plan Accomplishments**

### **Operations and Firefighting**

- The fire management agencies conducted a nationwide effort to update the fire management plans on every land management unit. Fire management plans (FMP's) provide the framework for wildfire responses. Ninety-two percent of the plans were completed on time.
- Achieved a 99 percent success rate at containing fires before they could become large and costly to suppress.
- Successfully deployed a reconfigured aviation fleet after removing large fixed-wing airtankers from service in response to safety concerns raised by the National Transportation Safety Board.
- Completed initial development of Phase I of the Fire Program Analysis (FPA) system and initiated interagency training.

- Implemented a new fire incident cost reporting system (FireCode) to allow the aggregation of the costs among all Federal wildland fire management agencies related to specific wildfires in a consistent and comparable manner.
- Hired, maintained, and trained a wildland fire management workforce of 15,301 personnel.
- Provided a firefighting fleet of 1,985 engines, dozers, and water/foam tenders, and over 200 aircraft.
- Continued construction and maintenance on 79 facilities including crew quarters, air tanker bases, helibases, offices and fire stations.
- Developed the Interagency Fire Program Qualifications Standard and Guide for key fire management positions to enhance firefighter safety and increase professionalism in interagency fire management programs.

**Hazardous Fuels Reduction**

- Treated over 3 million acres of hazardous fuels with dollars appropriated under the National Fire Plan. An additional 1 million acres of hazardous fuels were treated as a secondary benefit of activities funded with other appropriations.
- Treated over 1.8 million acres at the wildland urban interface.
- Treated 2.3 million acres with prescribed fire and 720,000 acres by mechanical and other means.
- Treated 125,000 acres through wildland fire use.
- Conducted over 600 projects using the Healthy Forests Initiative and Healthy Forests Restoration Act authorities on 670,000 acres.

**Community Assistance**

- Assisted over 14,000 communities with risk assessment plans, fuels hazard treatments, development of local fire departments' capacity, and wildfire preparedness.
- Increased firefighting capacity by providing technical assistance, training, supplies, and equipment.
- Provided educational and technical support, training, supplies and equipment to nearly 8,000 volunteer/rural fire departments.
- Conducted over 300 community defensible space workshops to help educate community members and reduce risks in fire-prone areas.
- Assisted communities with hazard assessments and funding for Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) for communities at risk.
- The Departments jointly awarded a Cooperative Agreement to the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) for biomass communication tools. The NACD is coordinating with the National Governors Association and the Western Governors Association to develop regional biomass conferences.

**Fire Research and Technology**

- Completed one of two LANDFIRE prototypes (Utah Zone 16). The prototype demonstrated the essential features, functional form, and practical applications of the LANDFIRE data and spatial data layers.
- Forest Service research teams continued to study the various aspects of wildland fire management including firefighter and public safety, fire weather and behavior, smoke dispersion, and post-fire susceptibility to invasive species.
- The Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP) and the U.S. Forest Service hosted three workshops focused on bringing fire managers and researchers together to discuss information needs, identify knowledge gaps, and pinpoint needed research. The JFSP funded 43 new research

projects in support of hazardous fuels reduction, post-fire rehabilitation, and smoke management. In addition, the JFSP funded three national demonstration projects to help local agency managers solve complex fuels hazard reduction and rehabilitation problems.

- Examples of tools generated by Forest Service and JFSP research teams include integrated fire and weather maps to generate 3-to-12 month fire forecasts; imagery-based, burn-severity maps used by Burned Area Emergency Response teams; and a fiberboard structural product made from low- or no-value material obtained from hazardous fuels treatments.

### **Increased Contracting and Jobs**

- Initiated approximately \$140 million in contractual actions.
- Eighty-six stewardship contracts were awarded in 2004. Byproducts from some of these projects were used in a number of products, such as timber, engineered lumber, paper and pulp, furniture and other value-added commodities, and bio-energy and bio-based products such as plastics, ethanol, and diesel.
- Convened a national meeting, the Bioenergy and Wood Products Conference, with industry, community and environmental organizations, and senior Administration officials to discuss opportunities for expanded use of woody biomass by-products of hazardous fuel reduction and forest restoration treatments.

### **Rehabilitation**

- Rehabilitated and restored burned areas through reforestation, seeding, road and trail restoration, invasive plant treatment, heritage site restoration, grazing management, insect and disease treatment watershed restoration, and restoration of streams, roads, and trails. These included new projects from fires in 2003 and a continuation of project work begun in FY 2001 and 2002.
- Developed an interagency strategy to establish monitoring protocols to evaluate the effectiveness of post-fire treatments.

### **Forest Health Management (USDA Forest Service Only<sup>1</sup>)**

- Provided funds for suppression, prevention, and restoration projects on nearly 280,000 acres of Federal lands and nearly 440,000 acres of cooperative lands to control and manage native and non-native invasive insects and diseases on federal lands.
- Surveyed, detected, monitored, and evaluated native and non-native forest invasive species including insects and diseases on federal and tribal forestlands.
- Focused invasive species suppression, prevention, and restoration efforts to support the goals of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003.

## **2005 Planned Accomplishments**

### **Operations and Firefighting**

- Complete 100 percent of all federal fire management plans in 2005.
- Implement emergency stabilization treatments on lands severely burned in 2005 and continue rehabilitation of lands severely burned in the fires of 2002, 2003, and 2004.
- Increase wildland fire use, consistent with land and resource management plans and public and firefighter safety and report these increases in future Budget Justifications.

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<sup>1</sup> Only the Forest Service is appropriated National Fire Plan funding for forest health management.

- Implement cost containment strategies for large fire suppression identified by the Strategic Issues Panel on Fire Suppression Costs Report and accepted by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council.
- Implement the Interagency Fire Program Qualifications Standard and Guide for key fire management positions to enhance firefighter safety and increase professionalism in interagency fire management programs. Establish 14 interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) standard fire management positions across both Departments.
- Initiate reengineering of the Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA) process to improve analyses of wildland fire suppression alternatives, enhance decision-making, and facilitate cost containment.
- Complete an interagency Phase I analysis of Fire Program Analysis (FPA) system for 39 interagency Fire Planning Units representing sixty percent of the initial response workload and greater than sixty percent of the Federal land base; initiate interagency development and evaluation of Phase II of Fire Program Analysis (FPA) system.
- Maintain 98 percent initial attack success.

**Hazardous Fuels Reduction**

- Implement provisions of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 to restore forest and rangeland health and prevent catastrophic wildfires on public lands through active land management efforts and facilitated administrative processes.
- Use categorical exclusions to save time and money in meeting NEPA's environmental impact analysis requirements for fuels projects.
- Conduct over 750 projects using the Healthy Forests Initiative and Healthy Forests Restoration Act authorities on 993,000 acres.
- The Departments of Energy, the Interior and Agriculture are leading the effort to form a Federal Woody Biomass Utilization Working Group to promote and support the utilization of woody biomass and woody biomass products from forest and woodland treatments.
- Complete the second LANDFIRE prototype (Montana Zone 19). Use LANDFIRE prototype (Utah zone 16) to help select 2006 fuels treatments.

**Community Assistance**

- Improve collaborative efforts with affected stakeholders to address landscape level, integrated, hazardous fuels treatments for high priority areas across all ownerships.
- Increase use of the provisions of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act and the President's Healthy Forests Initiative to better protect communities and the environment from the impacts of catastrophic wildland fire.
- CWPP working structures are emerging, bringing community residents together with local governments, local fire protection, and local forest management to establish fuel hazard reduction project prioritization for community protection.

**Fire Research and Technology**

- Data collection and processing will complete the LANDFIRE Rapid Assessment which will prepare vegetation dynamics models and map and model fire regime condition class (FRCC) at a broad, but finer scale than the existing FRCC coarse scale map for the entire United States.

**Increased Contracting and Jobs**

- Use stewardship contracting authority to remove small diameter material, improve forest health, and stimulate local economic opportunities.

- Increase the number of stewardship projects awarded that are designed to improve forest and woodland health. This will be accomplished by implementing lessons learned from the first two years of stewardship contracting and capitalizing on successes in collaboration with local and rural communities.
- Cooperate with the National Association of Conservation Districts to expand opportunities with other interested stakeholders including planning regional workshops on woody biomass utilization. The NACD is including biomass utilization as one of three main discussion tracks at their 2005 annual convention in Atlanta, Georgia.

**Rehabilitation and Restoration**

- Implement rehabilitation projects in the highest priority areas identified within areas burned during the fires of 2002, 2003, and 2004, and fund these projects from previously appropriated funds and other appropriate National Forest System budget line items.
- Continue implementation of the Interagency Program to Supply and Manage Native Plant Materials.
- Initiate development of a national website to provide information on the Burned Area Rehabilitation program as recommended by the General Accounting Office.

**Forest Health Management (USDA Forest Service Only)**

- Conduct native and non-native invasive insect and disease suppression, and prevention projects on approximately 274,000 Federal acres and 238,000 cooperative acres.
- Program will focus invasive species suppression, prevention, and restoration efforts to support the goals of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003.

**2006 Program Emphases****Strategic Priorities**

- Improve communications with States, Tribes, non-governmental organizations, and other partners to ensure collaboration.
- Promote accountability for National Fire Plan funding and accomplishments.
- Emphasize the integration of Community Wildfire Protection Plans with Federal hazardous fuels mitigation priorities.
- Begin transition to a permanently reconfigured aviation fleet based on an interagency aviation strategic plan.

**Operations and Firefighting**

- Maintain a 98 percent initial attack success rate.
- Continue to implement suppression operations cost containment strategies.
- Implement emergency stabilization treatments on lands that were severely burned in 2006 and rehabilitate lands that were severely burned in the fires of 2003, 2004, and 2005.
- Continue reengineering of the Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA) process to improve analyses of wildland fire suppression alternatives, enhance decision-making, and facilitate cost containment.
- Complete an interagency preparedness analysis using Phase I of the Fire Program Analysis (FPA) system on all Fire Planning Units; continue interagency development of Phase II of the interagency Fire Program Analysis system.

**Hazardous Fuels Reduction**

- Treat over 1.9 million acres in the wildland urban interface.
- Improve placement of fuels treatment projects to better reduce the threat to communities and natural resources.
- Expand forest health protection and biomass utilization projects that support the fuels treatment program.
- Expand use of the provisions of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act and the President's Healthy Forests Initiative to better protect communities and the environment from the impacts of catastrophic wildland fire.

**Community Assistance**

- Utilize CWPP's to help guide fuel hazard reduction and forest restoration project selection across ownership on a landscape scale.

**Fire Research and Technology**

- Maintain high level of research in support of firefighting capacity, forest and rangeland rehabilitation and restoration, hazardous fuels reduction, and community assistance.
- Complete the western U.S. portion of LANDFIRE. All mid-scale, comprehensive and consistent spatial data layers, models, and tools will be available in support of analyses for prioritization and planning of fuels projects at national, regional, and local scales.

**Increased Contracting and Jobs**

- Continue to expand the use of contracts in hazardous fuels reduction projects, especially in the wildland urban interface.

**Rehabilitation and Restoration**

- Implement rehabilitation projects in the highest priority areas identified within areas burned during the fires of 2003, 2004, and 2005, and fund these projects from previously appropriated funds and other appropriate National Forest System budget line items.

**Forest Health Management (USDA Forest Service Only)**

- Conduct native and non-native invasive insect and disease suppression, and prevention projects on approximately 128,000 Federal acres and 113,000 cooperative acres.
- Program will focus invasive species suppression, prevention, and restoration efforts to support the goals of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003.

**2006 Budget Highlights**

The budget request for 2006 reflects the President's continuing concern about the vulnerability of people and their property to the destruction caused by unwanted and uncontrolled wildfires. The President and the Secretaries are therefore proposing an increase of \$67.4 million, 7.8 percent more than the 2005 fire suppression budget.

The budget supports the recent enactment of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act by adding \$28.3 million for hazardous fuels reduction. These funds will be used to treat lands in high priority projects that use HFRA authorities and to gather data to meet HFRA's monitoring requirements. Monitoring protocols are scheduled for completion and implementation in 2005.



## Three-Year National Fire Plan Funding Table

(dollars in thousands)

AGENCY/Program	FY 2004 Final Appropriation	FY 2005 Enacted to Date with Rescissions	FY 2006 President's Budget	FY 2006 vs. FY 2005
<b>INTERIOR</b>				
<b>Preparedness</b>	<b>254,180</b>	<b>258,939</b>	<b>272,852</b>	<b>13,913</b>
<b>Fire Suppression Operations</b>	<b>192,903</b>	<b>218,445</b>	<b>234,167</b>	<b>15,722</b>
<b>Other Operations:</b>				
Hazardous Fuels Reduction	183,896	201,409	211,220	9,811
Burned Area Rehabilitation	24,198	23,939	24,476	537
Facilities Construction and Maintenance	12,222	12,202	7,849	-4,353
Joint Fire Science Program	7,901	7,889	6,000	-1,889
State and Local Assistance	9,877	9,861	0	-9,861
<b>Other Operations Total</b>	<b>238,094</b>	<b>255,300</b>	<b>249,545</b>	<b>-5,755</b>
<b>Subtotal, DOI</b>	<b>685,177</b>	<b>732,684</b>	<b>756,564</b>	<b>23,880</b>
Supplementals	198,416	98,611	0	-98,611
<b>Total, DOI</b>	<b>883,593</b>	<b>831,295</b>	<b>756,564</b>	<b>-74,731</b>
<b>FOREST SERVICE</b>				
<b>Preparedness</b>	<b>671,621</b>	<b>676,470</b>	<b>668,014</b>	<b>-8,456</b>
<b>Fire Suppression Operations</b>	<b>597,130</b>	<b>648,859</b>	<b>700,492</b>	<b>51,633</b>
<b>Other Operations:</b>				
Hazardous Fuels Reduction (C)	233,489	262,539	281,000	18,461
Rehabilitation	6,914	12,819	2,000	-10,819
Fire Plan Research and Development	22,025	21,719	16,885	-4,834
Joint Fire Science Program (A)	7,901	7,889	8,000	111
Forest Health Management (federal lands)	14,815	14,792	6,974	-7,818
Forest Health Management (co-op lands)	9,877	9,861	4,598	-5,263
State Fire Assistance	84,447	73,099	50,334	-22,765
Volunteer Fire Assistance	13,175	13,806	13,806	0
<b>Other Operations total</b>	<b>392,643</b>	<b>416,524</b>	<b>383,597</b>	<b>-32,927</b>
<b>Subtotal, Forest Service</b>	<b>1,661,394</b>	<b>1,741,853</b>	<b>1,752,103</b>	<b>10,250</b>
Supplementals (B)	724,077	425,471	0	-425,471
<b>Total, Forest Service</b>	<b>2,385,471</b>	<b>2,167,324</b>	<b>1,752,103</b>	<b>-415,221</b>
<b>INTERIOR &amp; FOREST SERVICE</b>				
<b>Preparedness</b>	<b>925,801</b>	<b>935,409</b>	<b>940,866</b>	<b>5,457</b>
<b>Fire Suppression Operations</b>	<b>790,033</b>	<b>867,304</b>	<b>934,659</b>	<b>67,355</b>
<b>Other Operations:</b>				
Hazardous Fuels Reduction	417,385	463,948	492,220	28,272
Rehabilitation	31,112	36,758	26,476	-10,282
Facilities Construction and Maintenance	12,222	12,202	7,849	-4,353
Joint Fire Science Program (A)	15,802	15,778	14,000	-1,778
Fire Plan Research and Development	22,025	21,719	16,885	-4,834
Forest Health Management (federal lands)	14,815	14,792	6,974	-7,818
Forest Health Management (co-op lands)	9,877	9,861	4,598	-5,263
State Fire Assistance	84,447	73,099	50,334	-22,765

(dollars in thousands)

AGENCY/Program	FY 2004 Final Appropriation	FY 2005 Enacted to Date with Rescissions	FY 2006 President's Budget	FY 2006 vs. FY 2005
Volunteer Fire Assistance	13,175	13,806	13,806	0
State and Local Assistance	9,877	9,861	0	-9,861
<b>Other Operations total</b>	<b>630,737</b>	<b>671,824</b>	<b>633,142</b>	<b>-38,682</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>2,346,571</b>	<b>2,474,537</b>	<b>2,508,667</b>	<b>34,130</b>
Supplementals (B)	922,493	524,082	0	-524,082
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3,269,064</b>	<b>2,998,619</b>	<b>2,508,667</b>	<b>-489,952</b>

- A) In FY 2004 and 2005, Forest Service funding for the Joint Fire Science Program came from suppression appropriations. In FY 2006, funding came from the Forest Service's preparedness appropriations.
- B) Supplemental appropriations to the Forest Service in FY 2004 and FY 2005 were for fire suppression operations. \$24,843,000 of the FY 2004 supplemental and \$30,000,000 of the FY 2005 supplemental were earmarked for hazardous fuels treatments.
- C) In FY 2004 and FY 2005, Forest Service funding for Hazardous Fuels Reduction were from Wildland Fire Management appropriations. In FY 2006, Forest Service funding for Hazardous Fuels will come from National Forest System appropriations.

## National Fire Plan – Common Performance Measures Department of the Interior and Forest Service FY 2004 – 2006

### Summary of common performance measures

Performance Measure	FY 2004 Actual	FY 2005 Plan	FY 2006 Request
Percent of unplanned and unwanted fires controlled during initial attack	<b>99%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>98%</b>
Gross fire suppression cost per acre <sup>A/</sup>	<b>\$114</b>	<b>\$169</b>	<b>\$182</b>
Number of high-priority acres treated in the WUI.	1,311,272 FS <u>490,000 DOI</u> <b>1,801,272 Total</b>	1,281,000 FS <u>421,000 DOI</u> <b>1,702,000 Total</b>	1,450,000 FS <u>479,000 DOI</u> <b>1,929,000 Total</b>
Number of acres in condition class 2 or 3 treated outside the WUI in fire regimes 1, 2, or 3.	441,388 FS <u>494,000 DOI</u> <b>935,388 Total</b>	292,000 FS <u>420,000 DOI</u> <b>712,000 Total</b>	315,000 FS <u>373,000 DOI</u> <b>688,000 Total</b>
Number of acres in fire regimes 1, 2, or 3 moved to a better condition class <sup>B/</sup>	761,045 FS <u>294,000 DOI</u> <b>1,055,045 Total</b>	503,800 FS <u>259,000 DOI</u> <b>762,800 Total</b>	500,000 FS <u>230,000 DOI</u> <b>730,000 Total</b>
Number of acres in fire regimes 1, 2, or 3 moved to a better condition class per million dollars gross investment <sup>C/</sup>	2,946 FS <u>1,598 DOI</u> <b>2,527 Total</b>	1,919 FS <u>1,286 DOI</u> <b>1,644 Total</b>	1,780 FS <u>1,089 DOI</u> <b>1,483 Total</b>

<sup>A/</sup> Estimated acres burned and costs for 2005 and 2006 are based on the 10-year actual averages from 1995-2004. Acres include all acres, regardless of ownership.

<sup>B/</sup> FY 2004 Forest Service acres in fire regimes 1, 2, or 3 moved to a better condition class exceeded expectations due to an exceptionally long and productive prescribed burn season across much of the U.S.

<sup>C/</sup> The number of acres in fire regimes 1, 2, or 3 moved to a better condition class per million gross investment are calculated using all hazardous fuels dollar allocations; the Forest Service's FY 2004 figure for this measure also includes \$24,843,000 in supplemental hazardous fuels appropriations. The number of acres in fire regimes 1, 2, or 3 moved to a better condition class per million gross investment are calculated using all hazardous fuels dollar allocations; the Forest Service's FY 2004 figure for this measure also includes \$24,843,000 in supplemental hazardous fuels appropriations. The total figures for this performance measure represent the composite total for the two Departments (i.e., combined acres moved to a better condition class per combined million dollars gross investment).

## WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

### APPROPRIATION LANGUAGE SHEET

For necessary expenses for fire preparedness, suppression operations, fire science and research, emergency rehabilitation, and hazardous fuels reduction[, and rural fire assistance] by the Department of the Interior, [\$743,099,000] \$756,564,000, to remain available until expended, of which not to exceed [\$12,374,000] \$7,849,000 shall be for the renovation or construction of fire facilities: *Provided*, That such funds are also available for repayment of advances to other appropriation accounts from which funds were previously transferred for such purposes: *Provided further*, That persons hired pursuant to 43 U.S.C. 1469 may be furnished subsistence and lodging without cost from funds available from this appropriation: *Provided further*, That notwithstanding 42 U.S.C. 1856d, sums received by a bureau or office of the Department of the Interior for fire protection rendered pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1856 et seq., protection of United States property, may be credited to the appropriation from which funds were expended to provide that protection, and are available without fiscal year limitation: *Provided further*, That using the amounts designated under this title of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior may enter into procurement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements, for hazardous fuels reduction activities, and for training and monitoring associated with such hazardous fuels reduction activities, on Federal land, or on adjacent non-Federal land for activities that benefit resources on Federal land: *Provided further*, That the costs of implementing any cooperative agreement between the Federal Government and any non-Federal entity may be shared, as mutually agreed on by the affected parties: *Provided further*, That notwithstanding requirements of the Competition in Contracting Act, *but subject to any such requirements as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget may prescribe*, the Secretary, for purposes of hazardous fuels reduction activities, may obtain maximum practicable competition among: (1) local private, nonprofit, or cooperative entities; (2) Youth Conservation Corps crews or related partnerships with state, local, or non-profit youth groups; (3) small or micro-businesses; or (4) other entities that will hire or train locally a significant percentage, defined as 50 percent or more, of the project workforce to complete such contracts: *Provided further*, That in implementing this section, the Secretary shall develop written guidance to field units to ensure accountability and consistent application of the authorities provided herein: *Provided further*, That funds appropriated under this head may be used to reimburse the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service for the costs of carrying out their responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) to consult and conference, as required by section 7 of such Act, in connection with wildland fire management activities[: *Provided further*, That the Secretary of the Interior may use wildland fire appropriations to enter into non-competitive sole source leases of real property with local governments, at or below fair market value, to construct capitalized improvements for fire facilities on such leased properties, including but not limited to fire guard stations, retardant stations, and other

initial attack and fire support facilities, and to make advance payments for any such lease or for construction activity associated with the lease: *Provided further*, That the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture may authorize the transfer of funds appropriated for wildland fire management, in an aggregate amount not to exceed \$12,000,000, between the Departments when such transfers would facilitate and expedite jointly funded wildland fire management programs and projects: *Provided further*, That funds provided for wildfire suppression shall be available for support of Federal emergency response actions].

[For an additional amount for 'Wildland Fire Management', \$100,000,000, to remain available until expended, for urgent wildland fire suppression activities pursuant to section 312 of S. Con. Res. 95 (108th Congress) as made applicable to the House of Representatives by H. Res. 649 (108th Congress) and applicable to the Senate by section 14007 of Public Law 108-287: Provided, That such funds shall only become available if funds provided for wildland fire suppression in title I of this Act will be exhausted imminently and the Secretary of the Interior notifies the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations and the House and Senate Committees on the Budget in writing of the need for these additional funds: Provided further, That such funds are also available for repayment to other appropriation accounts from which funds were transferred for wildfire suppression: Provided further, That cost containment measures shall be implemented within this account for fiscal year 2005, and the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit a joint report to the Committees on Appropriations of the Senate and the House of Representatives on such cost containment measures by December 31, 2005: Provided further, That Public Law 108-287, title X, chapter 3 is amended under the heading 'Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Wildland Fire Management', by striking the phrases 'for fiscal year 2004' and 'related to the fiscal year 2004 fire season' in the text preceding the first proviso.](Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2005.)

**Justification of changes to appropriation language**

**Deletion:** *"...and rural fire assistance..."*

**Justification:** The Administration proposes to discontinue the Rural Fire Assistance grants program. The Forest Service and the Federal Emergency Management Agency have grants programs for local fire departments that can be used to fill the wildland firefighting equipment needs of the rural fire departments that cooperate with DOI bureaus. This budget includes an increase in Preparedness funding to provide wildland firefighter training and certification for local and volunteer fire departments.

**Deletion:** *"Provided further, That the Secretary of the Interior may use wildland fire appropriations to enter into non-competitive sole source leases of real property with local governments, at or below fair market value, to construct capitalized improvements for fire facilities on such leased properties, including but not limited to fire guard stations, retardant stations, and other initial attack and fire support facilities, and to make advance payments for any such lease or for construction activity associated with the lease:"*

**Justification:** The Administration does not support the provision allowing for non-competitive sole source leasing of fire facilities on non-federal lands. This is inconsistent with the Administration's general goal of promoting competition and would likely create an indirect subsidization of local community infrastructure at the expense of fire program needs. Moreover, it would likely become impossible over time to actually measure this subsidy.

**Deletion:** *"Provided further, That the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture may authorize the transfer of funds appropriated for wildland fire management, in an aggregate amount not to exceed \$12,000,000, between the Departments when such transfers would facilitate and expedite jointly funded wildland fire management programs and projects:"*

**Justification:** The Administration does not support this provision at this time because of concern about the potential impact of such changes on the integrity of the budget process, existing accounting practices, and the link between budget and performance. The Departments will review current policies and procedures regarding sharing of agency resources, including reimbursement practices and will advise Congress as to any need for legislative remedies, should it be determined that changes are needed.

**Deletion:** *"Provided further, That funds provided for wildfire suppression shall be available for support of Federal emergency response actions"*

**Justification:** This provision is not necessary because this authority is provided in Sections 101 and 102 of the General Provisions. Furthermore, extraordinary costs incurred by the Department in assisting the Federal Emergency Management Agency are reimbursed by that Agency.

**Deletion:** *"For an additional amount for 'Wildland Fire Management', \$100,000,000, to remain available until expended, for urgent wildland fire suppression activities... in the text preceding the first proviso."*

**Justification:** This provision is a one-time supplemental amount for wildland fire suppression in excess of the ten-year average cost. The Administration requests the ten-year average, as it is reliable predictor for an average year in the future.

## AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

### ***Appropriation Language Citations:***

16 U.S.C. 1; 16 U.S.C. 594; 16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee; 42 U.S.C. 1856; 42 U.S.C. 5121; 16 U.S.C. 3101; 43 U.S.C. 1469; 43 U.S.C. 1748; 25 U.S.C. 3101; P. L. 93-638; P. L. 103-413; P.L. 104-208; P.L. 105-83; P.L. 106-113; P.L. 106-291; P.L. 107-56; P.L. 107-234; P.L. 108-7; P.L. 108-108; P.L. 108-447.

***The National Park Service Organic Act (16 U.S.C. 1)*** provides basic authority for fire protection and suppression on National Park System lands.

***The Timber Protection Act of 1922 (16 U.S.C. 594)*** provides for mutual aid in fire protection.

***The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee)*** constituted an "Organic Act" for the National Wildlife Refuge System by providing guidelines and directives for administration and management of all areas in the system, including "wildlife refuges, areas for the protection and conservation of fish and wildlife that are threatened with extinction, wildlife ranges, wildlife management areas, and waterfowl production areas."

***The Reciprocal Fire Protection Agreement Act of 1955 (42 U.S.C. 1856)*** provides authority for mutual aid in fire protection and allows for emergency assistance in the vicinity of agency facilities in extinguishing fire when no agreement exists.

***The Disaster Relief Act of May 22, 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5121)*** authorizes Federal agencies to assist State and local governments during emergencies or major disasters by direction of the President.

***The Alaska Native Claim Settlement Act of 1971, as amended by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (16 U.S.C. 3101 et. seq.)*** provides that as long as there are no substantial revenues from those lands, Alaska Native Corporation lands will receive wildland fire protection services from the U.S. at no cost.

***The National Indian Forest Resources Management Act of 1990 (25 U.S.C. 3101)*** provides BIA with authority for fire protection and suppression on Indian Trust Lands.

***The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1748), as amended,*** provides for protection of public lands and resources from destruction by fire.

***43 U.S.C. 1469*** authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to perform work occasioned by emergencies.

***The Tribal-Self Governance Act of 1994, P. L. 103-413,*** establishes a program with DOI known as tribal "self-governance", authorizing the compacting of the Department of the Interior programs.

***Section 102 of the General Provisions of the Annual Appropriations Act for the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies*** authorizes the Secretary to transfer funds from other Department accounts for the suppression or emergency prevention of forest or range fires on or threatening the public lands and for the rehabilitation of burned lands.

**Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003, P.L. 108-148** requires that fuels reduction and forest management projects be planned through a local and state collaborative process and conducted in a manner consistent with applicable land, resource and fire management plans.

### OTHER PROGRAM GUIDANCE

In addition to the legislative basis for the wildland fire management program, major program evaluations, listed below, completed in recent years have contributed to the framework for implementation of the National Fire Plan.

- National Fire Plan (“A Report to the President in Response to the Wildfires of 2000, September 8, 2000”).
- National Academy of Public Administration “Study of the Implementation of the Federal Wildland Fire Policy”, December 2000.
- Federal Wildland Fire Policy, as amended, 2001.
- 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy: A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment, August 2001.
- National Academy of Public Administration, “Managing Wildland Fire, Enhancing Capacity to Implement the Federal Interagency Policy, December 2001.
- DOI Rural Fire Assistance Program Evaluation, January 2002.
- General Accounting Office Report 02-259, “Severe Wildland Fires: Leadership and Accountability Needed to Reduce Risks to Communities and Resources”, February 2002.
- Interagency Acquisition and Assistance Program Evaluation, March 2002.
- General Accounting Office Report 02-158, “Wildland Fire Management: Improved Planning Will Help Agencies Better Identify Fire-Fighting Preparedness Needs”, March 2002.
- Implementation Plan for the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy: A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment, May 2002.
- National Academy of Public Administration, “Wildfire Suppression: Strategies for Containing Costs”, September 2002.
- Blue Ribbon Aviation Panel Report, “Federal Aerial Firefighting: Assessing Safety and Effectiveness”, December 2002.
- The Administration’s Program Assessment Rating Tool evaluation of the wildland fire management program, September 2002.
- General Accounting Office, GAO-03-1047, “Geospatial Information, Technologies Hold Promise for Wildland Fire Management, but Challenges Remain”, September 2003.
- General Accounting Office, GAO-03-430, “Wildland Fires, Better Information Needed on Effectiveness of Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation”, April 2003.
- General Accounting Office Report 03-805, “Wildland Fire Management: Additional Actions Required to Better Identify and Prioritize Lands Needing Fuels Reduction”, August 2003.
- National Academy of Public Administration, “Containing Wildland Fire Costs: Improving Equipment and Services Acquisition”, September 2003.
- National Academy of Public Administration, “Containing Wildland Fire Costs: Utilizing Local Firefighting Forces”, December 2003.
- National Transportation Safety Board Recommendations to the USDA Forest Service and Department of the Interior, April 2004.
- Government Accountability Office, GAO-04-612, “Wildfire Suppression: Funding Transfers Cause Project Cancellations and Delays, Strained Relationships, and Management Disruptions”, June 2004.



- Government Accountability Office, GAO-04-652, "Federal Land Management: Additional Guidance on Community Involvement Could Enhance Effectiveness of Stewardship Contracting", June 2004.
- Government Accountability Office, GAO-04-705, "Wildland Fires: Forest Service and BLM Need Better Information and a Systematic Approach for Assessing the Risks of Environmental Effects", June 2004.
- "Large Fire Suppression Costs: Strategies for Cost Containment: A Report to the Wildland Fire Leadership Council from the Strategic Issues Panel on Fire Suppression Costs", August 2004.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE FY 2006 BUDGET REQUEST**

The Wildland Fire Management (WFM) appropriation provides the Department's funding for performing the wildland fire prevention, suppression, and rehabilitation activities of the National Fire Plan (NFP). The program supports two of the mission goals of the Department Strategic Plan, Serving Communities and Resource Protection. WFM activities are performed by four of the DOI bureaus, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the National Park Service (NPS), and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The Office of Wildland Coordination (OWFC) coordinates the Department's NFP efforts among the Interior bureaus and with other agencies. Multi-bureau operational programs are managed by the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC). Interior's major partner in the NFP is the USDA Forest Service. The Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC), consisting of high-level Federal, State, and county officials, and other non-Federal partners, provides policy guidance for the NFP participating agencies.

The WFM program serves communities by reducing hazardous fuels and improving the management of wildland fires. The people, resources, and property of many communities, especially in the West, are threatened by conditions that are conducive to catastrophic wildfires: dangerous fuel loads in forests, increasing human habitation in the wildland urban interface (WUI), high temperatures, and persistent drought. Through this program, the Department cooperates with its Federal, State, and local partners to reduce the levels of hazardous fuels, prepare for and respond to wildfires, suppress and contain unwanted and unplanned fires, and stabilize areas that have suffered damage from the wildfires. The Department devotes about 65 percent of its Hazardous Fuels Reduction funding to reducing fuel loads in the wildland urban interface.

The program supports the Departmental goal of Resource Protection and strategy of restoring and maintaining proper function of watersheds and landscapes by reducing hazardous fuels outside the WUI and beginning the restoration of burned areas into fire-adapted areas. The buildup of hazardous fuels on an estimated 190 million acres of lands under Federal management not only presents imminent danger to WUI communities, but also sets the stage for the devastation of the land and the valuable natural resources found there.

In 2004 over 8 million acres burned, at a cost of \$918.8 million to control. Interior's share of that cost was \$281.2 million. The continued buildup of hazardous fuels in forests and rangelands, the ongoing migration of human populations into the wildland urban interface, and extended drought throughout much of the country, particularly in the West, will continue to present extraordinary fire risks. The long-term solution is to direct resources to activities that will address the buildup of hazardous fuels in forests and rangelands. The Department's Hazardous Fuels Reduction program devotes about 35 percent of its funding to reduce hazardous fuels on those non-WUI lands by forest thinning, prescribed fire, and wildland fire use. Treatments to reduce hazardous fuels in forests and rangelands not only reduce the risk of catastrophic fire; treatments reduce the negative economic impacts to communities by reducing the likelihood of fire damage and the severity of damage from fires that do occur. Furthermore, it is not necessary to treat every acre to protect a forest or range area from uncontrolled fire. Strategically selected acreage can be treated to reduce the risk of damaging fire from much larger areas. In addition, the Administration is emphasizing stewardship contracting, categorical exclusion, and biomass utilization to further reduce the Federal costs for fuels treatment.

Lands that have been devastated by catastrophic wildfire are sometimes unable to return to fire-adapted conditions without human intervention, therefore, the Department has a program for burned area rehabilitation that begins the process of returning the severely burned areas to fire-adapted conditions, using native and other desirable plant species.

Interior has made substantial progress in achieving the goals of the National Fire Plan 10-Year Implementation Plan and the President's Healthy Forests Initiative. Since adoption of the National Fire Plan, significant investments in preparedness resources have strengthened initial and extended attack capability. The Department's success rate for containing wildfires at initial attack increased from 92 percent in 2000 to a range of 95-98 percent from 2001 through 2004, a success rate critical to preventing losses to communities and resources resulting from catastrophic fires. Success on initial attack prevents the emergence of large-scale, catastrophic fires which account for approximately 80 percent of all suppression expenditures. Key technology investments and continued coordination and collaboration with partners will help maintain this level of success while also improving the overall cost-effectiveness of the fire program.

The first five years under the National Fire Plan (2001-2005) have been focused on building suppression response capability and collaborating with State, community, and tribal partners to begin identifying and treating high priority hazardous fuels problems, especially in the wildland urban interface. The Department has improved strategic collaboration through expanded community and private sector involvement with contracting opportunities and local participation in setting fuel treatment priorities, established standards for accountability and measuring program performance, and collaborated with partners to create the Wildland Fire Leadership Council.

In the next five years, the Wildland Fire Management program will shift its focus to applying advanced analytical tools and science to improve decision-making and produce more cost-effective outcomes. This will be done within the framework provided by the Department's Strategic Plan, the President's Management Agenda, the Healthy Forests Initiative, and the Secretary's priorities for partnerships and greater collaboration. Hazardous fuels reduction efforts will be aided by broad-scale mapping of fuels conditions to identify areas of highest risk from wildfire and assist managers in prioritizing treatments. The LANDFIRE fuels mapping effort will provide data and fuels assessment models for all 50 states. Remote sensing and other scientific data will be used to assess the effectiveness of treatments and improve program cost-effectiveness. By implementing monitoring protocols and analytical models to aid in the location and sequencing of fuels treatments, managers will be able to develop more effective plans for land and fire management to improve forest health and reduce risk. The Fire Program Analysis program will enable land and resource managers to allocate resources more effectively across multiple land unit boundaries in the future. FPA will enable the program to determine optimal resource allocations at all organizational levels from the fire planning unit all the way to the national, interagency level.

The Department proposes a 2006 budget request of \$756.6 million that focuses on the goals of the President's Healthy Forests Initiative, the Department of the Interior Strategic Plan, and the 10-Year Implementation Plan for the National Fire Plan. The program improvements identified in this request can be accommodated by a funding level that is \$23.9 million over the 2005 enacted level. A summary of the proposed budget changes follow. No Federal FTE changes are proposed because the additional workload will be directed to private sector contractors or offset through reprioritizations within the program.

**Uncontrollable Cost Changes (+\$9,202,000)**

Costs associated with the January 2005 and 2006 Federal pay raises and expected increases in health insurance costs will cost the DOI WFM program an estimated \$9.2 million in 2006. This increase will enable the fire management bureaus to maintain firefighting staffing and resources at the 2005 level.

**Suppression Operations (+\$15,722,000)**

The Department proposes to fund suppression operations at the 10-year average annual cost from 1995 through 2004, \$234.2 million. Several major factors have been contributing to the increasing average annual cost for both DOI and Forest Service suppression operations. These factors include costs associated with suppression in areas of high hazardous fuel loads, long-term drought in the West, and the increasing complexity of suppression in the wildland urban interface. The Wildland Fire Management agencies continue to look for opportunities to reduce suppression costs—both at individual fire incidents and, more broadly, by examining overall land management strategies and decision structures. The agencies are now considering the findings and recommendations of the Strategic Issues Panel on Fire Suppression Costs, convened by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, and will continue to assign large-fire cost review teams to analyze the cost efficiency of various aspects of fire suppression.

**Aviation Fleet Reconfiguration (+\$5,010,000)**

During the 2004 fire season, the Forest Service removed 33 large air tankers from firefighting service due to findings that the safety of these aircraft could not be assured. To maintain the same level of initial attack success, the fire program replaced these aircraft with additional single engine air tankers (SEATs) and helicopters, many of which operate under contracts funded by DOI. Although some air tankers have been returned to service, we expect to continue to operate in the near future with fewer heavy air tankers and with more SEATs and helicopters.

An increase of \$5.0 million is proposed in Preparedness to cover the anticipated DOI 2006 contract costs for additional SEATs and helicopters that will be needed in lieu of the large airtankers. An interagency strategic plan for aviation resources will guide future decisions about the size and composition of the reconfigured fleet. The increase will also cover expected increases in the costs incurred by the contractors for insurance, safety requirements, and pilot training.

**Hazardous Fuels Reduction projects (+\$6,720,000 in the WUI; +\$3,618,000 outside the WUI)**

The Department proposes a program increase of \$10.3 million for hazardous fuels reduction projects. The request supports the PART long-term goals to reduce hazardous fuels and restore fire-adapted ecosystems, which are also key goals of the 10-Year Implementation Plan.

The focus of the National Fire Plan and our hazardous fuels reduction program has been on reducing the risk of damage from catastrophic wildfires to people and property. Acres treated and average cost per acre treated have been the key measurements used by the fire management agencies to validate fuels reduction progress. However, the number of acres treated is not always related to the degree of risk reduction. Sometimes smaller treatments provide greater risk reduction. The outcome of protecting communities from risk can be enhanced to a degree that is not proportional to the number of acres treated.

As the Department implements the fuels program in 2006, we intend to begin shifting performance focus away from the number of acres treated toward success in treating priority acres. This change in focus will provide better risk reduction to communities and resources. The 2006 budget request is the first to reflect this refined view. Fewer acres are being proposed in total for fuels reduction in 2006. However, the Department is convinced that the value of the acres to be treated in terms of risk reduction will be greater than ever before because strategic placement of fuels reduction treatment acres across a landscape is more important than the number of acres treated.

**Initial and Extended Attack Readiness (+\$1,874,000)**

Interior proposes to build a ready reserve of Type 2 firefighters and, long-term, Type 3 teams who are qualified for initial and extended attack. The focus of this assistance will be on developing and delivering wildland firefighting training targeted to volunteer and rural fire departments (RFDs). In 2006, firefighter training will be repackaged for delivery at local fire facilities around the country. Additional training will be developed that bridges existing training in both the structural and wildland fire sectors, and training delivery will begin. A supplementary workforce of 1,000 - 2,000 RFD personnel would be trained each year. Over time, many of these will be qualified to fill Type 3 team positions in extended attack operations at the local level. This enhancement of local capacity will reduce the Department's reliance on the more expensive alternative of transporting Federal and contract firefighters from other regions of the country. This approach will be employed to supersede the Rural Fire Assistance grants program.

**LANDFIRE (-\$2,500,000)**

The Department proposes a \$2.5 million reduction in the Hazardous Fuels Reduction program for the LANDFIRE hazardous fuels assessment mapping and resource monitoring project, returning LANDFIRE funding to a level in line with the project development schedule. The project has an accelerated schedule for mapping in 2004 and 2005 in order to expedite the production of baseline data to managers in western states with severe hazardous fuels problems. Development will continue in 2006 at a reduced cost because many of the accelerated start-up costs for data acquisition and the fuels assessment model development are funded in 2005. This reduction will have no impact on the LANDFIRE development schedule.

**Rural Fire Assistance Grants (-\$9,861,000)**

This proposal will eliminate the Rural Fire Assistance grants program in order to avoid overlap with USDA and FEMA fire assistance programs. Direct assistance to communities will be delivered through firefighter training to be provided to rural fire departments in communities near DOI-managed land, as mentioned above.

**Facilities Construction and Maintenance (-\$4,353,000)**

Funding for fire facilities construction and maintenance will be focused on the most critical healthy and safety infrastructure needs. Over \$4.3 million will be redirected to address higher priority suppression and fuels reduction needs.

**Joint Fire Science (-\$1,989,000)**

DOI-funded fire research will be provided through the Joint Fire Science Program at a more sustainable \$6 million level relative to overall fire management funding. Nearly \$2.0 million will be redirected to address higher priority preparedness and fuels reduction needs.

**SUMMARY OF TOTAL REQUEST  
CURRENT BUDGET STRUCTURE**  
(dollars in thousands)

Budget Authority	2004 Actual	2005 Estimate	2006 Request	2006 Request Change from 2005	
				Amount	Percent
<b>Preparedness</b>	<b>254,180</b>	<b>258,939</b>	<b>272,852</b>	<b>+13,913</b>	<b>+5.4%</b>
<b>Suppression Operations</b>	<b>192,903</b>	<b>218,445</b>	<b>234,167</b>	<b>+15,722</b>	<b>+7.2%</b>
<b>Other Operations</b>	<b>238,093</b>	<b>255,300</b>	<b>249,545</b>	<b>-5,755</b>	<b>-2.3%</b>
<i>Hazardous Fuels Reduction</i>	<i>183,896</i>	<i>201,409</i>	<i>211,220</i>	<i>+9,811</i>	<i>+4.9%</i>
<i>Burned Area Rehabilitation</i>	<i>24,198</i>	<i>23,939</i>	<i>24,476</i>	<i>+537</i>	<i>+2.2%</i>
<i>Fire Facilities</i>	<i>12,222</i>	<i>12,202</i>	<i>7,849</i>	<i>-4,353</i>	<i>-35.7%</i>
<i>Joint Fire Science Program</i>	<i>7,901</i>	<i>7,889</i>	<i>6,000</i>	<i>-1,889</i>	<i>-23.9%</i>
<i>Rural Fire Assistance</i>	<i>9,877</i>	<i>9,861</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>-9,861</i>	<i>-100%</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>685,177</b>	<b>732,684</b>	<b>756,564</b>	<b>+23,880</b>	<b>+3.3%</b>
<i>FTE</i>	<i>4,814</i>	<i>4,590</i>	<i>4,590</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0%</i>
Emergency Contingency Appropriations (a)	[+198,416]	[+98,611]			

(a) \$98,416 was appropriated in P.L.108-108 for repayment of Section 102 emergency transfers. An additional \$100,000 was appropriated in P.L.108-287 for 2004 emergency suppression costs. In 2005, \$98,611,000 was appropriated in Title IV of the Interior appropriations act, P.L. 108-447 for emergency suppression if needed in 2005.

**SUMMARY OF TOTAL REQUEST  
PROPOSED BUDGET STRUCTURE**  
(dollars in thousands)

Budget Authority	2004 Actual	2005 Estimate	2006 Request	2006 Request Change from 2005	
				Amount	Percent
<b>Preparedness</b>	<b>274,303</b>	<b>279,030</b>	<b>286,701</b>	<b>+7,671</b>	<b>+2.8%</b>
<i>Fire Readiness</i>	<i>254,180</i>	<i>258,939</i>	<i>272,852</i>	<i>+13,913</i>	<i>+5.4%</i>
<i>Fire Facilities</i>	<i>12,222</i>	<i>12,202</i>	<i>7,849</i>	<i>-4,353</i>	<i>-35.7%</i>
<i>Joint Fire Science Program</i>	<i>7,901</i>	<i>7,889</i>	<i>6,000</i>	<i>-1,889</i>	<i>-23.9%</i>
<b>Suppression Operations</b>	<b>192,903</b>	<b>218,445</b>	<b>234,167</b>	<b>+15,722</b>	<b>+7.2%</b>
<b>Hazardous Fuels Reduction</b>	<b>183,896</b>	<b>201,409</b>	<b>211,220</b>	<b>+9,811</b>	<b>+4.9%</b>
<i>WUI Fuels Reduction</i>	<i>109,884</i>	<i>128,299</i>	<i>133,492</i>	<i>+5,193</i>	<i>+4.0%</i>
<i>Non-WUI Fuels Reduction</i>	<i>74,012</i>	<i>73,110</i>	<i>77,728</i>	<i>+4,618</i>	<i>+6.3%</i>
<b>Burned Area Rehabilitation</b>	<b>24,198</b>	<b>23,939</b>	<b>24,476</b>	<b>+537</b>	<b>+2.2%</b>
<b>Other Operations</b>	<b>9,877</b>	<b>9,861</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-9,861</b>	<b>-100%</b>
<i>Rural Fire Assistance</i>	<i>9,877</i>	<i>9,861</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>-9,861</i>	<i>-100%</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>685,177</b>	<b>732,684</b>	<b>756,564</b>	<b>+23,880</b>	<b>+3.3%</b>
<i>FTE</i>	<i>4,814</i>	<i>4,590</i>	<i>4,590</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0%</i>
Emergency Contingency Appropriations (a)	[+198,416]	[+98,611]			

**BUDGET REQUEST BY DOI MISSION COMPONENT**

(dollars in thousands)

	2005 Enacted	2006 Request	Change from 2005
Resource Projection	97,049	102,204	+5,155
Resource Use	0	0	0
Recreation	0	0	0
Serving Communities	635,635	654,360	+18,725
Management	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>732,684</b>	<b>756,564</b>	<b>+23,880</b>

## **THE PRESIDENT'S MANAGEMENT AGENDA**

The 2006 budget request for Wildland Fire Management directly supports the President's Management Agenda by continuing to develop science-based tools (LANDFIRE and Fire Program Analysis (FPA)) to identify and implement more cost-effective strategies targeted to accomplishing measurable objectives. Much of the field work in the implementation of the FPA system and LANDFIRE will be contracted to universities and private businesses. Competitive sourcing will be fostered by the expanded fuels reduction program, with more than 50 percent of project dollars being invested in contracts. The development of monitoring protocols for hazardous fuels reduction and burned area rehabilitation will be conducted in large part by outside experts in 2005.

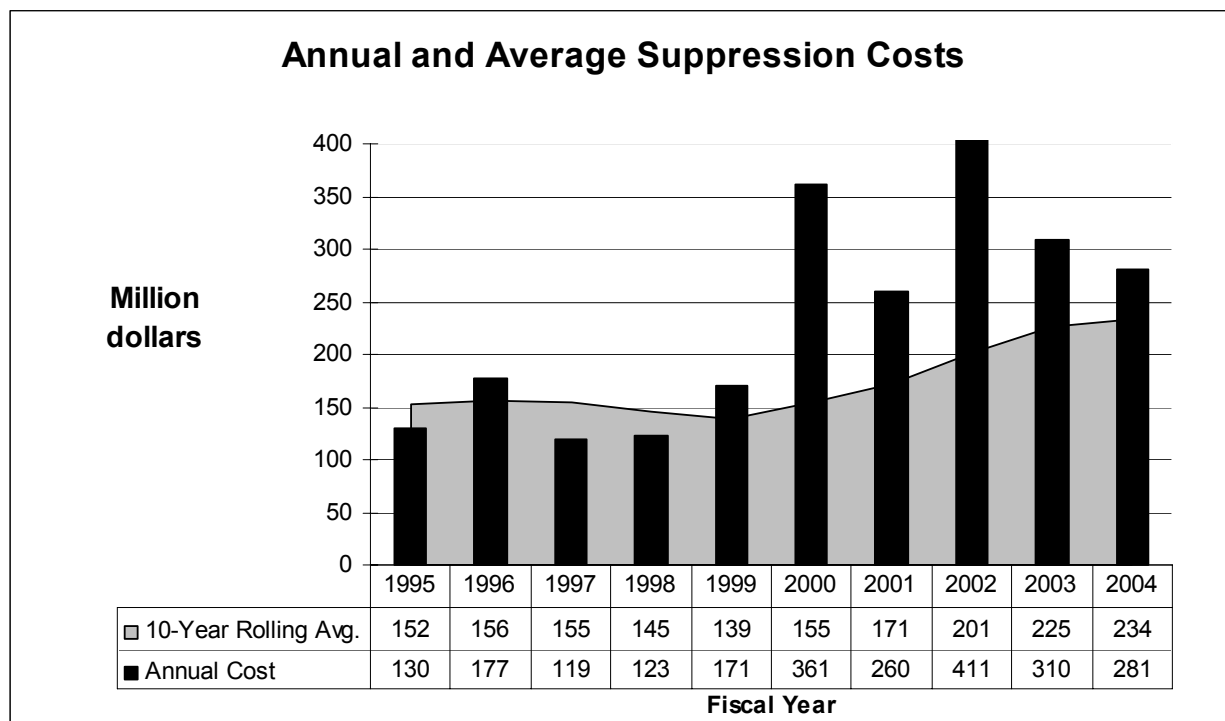
**Budget and Performance Integration** - The 2006 request advances the linkage between the budget for Wildland Fire Management and its program performance in several key ways listed and described below.

**Cost Containment** - The high cost of suppression operations continues to be a major concern to the Wildland Fire Management program. The long-term rise in average suppression costs is driving an effort to improve the cost efficiency of fighting fires, particularly those that require extended attack. Several significant factors contribute to the increasing average annual cost for both DOI and Forest Service suppression operations. These factors include costs associated with suppression in areas of high hazardous fuel loads, long-term drought in the West, and the increasing complexity of suppression in the wildland urban interface. The improvement in initial attack success from 92 percent in the 2000 pre-National Fire Plan season to 97 percent or better in the 2002, 2003 and 2004 fire seasons demonstrates the effectiveness of increasing initial response capability achieved under the Plan. The Department and the Forest Service are now shifting more attention toward improving the effectiveness and cost efficiency of extended attack on large fires. When the appropriate management response to a wildfire is initial attack, high per acre initial attack success avoids:

- Potentially higher suppression costs
- Significant resource damage
- Loss of economic benefits from tourism and resource-dependent industries, and
- Loss of community infrastructure (homes, roads, etc.).

The Department's success in wildfire response has not been sufficient to prevent the long-term rising trend in suppression costs. The Wildland Fire Leadership Council has been leading the interagency efforts to contain rising costs and has made suppression cost containment the major focus of its efforts in the past year -- both at individual fire incidents and, more broadly, by examining overall land management strategies and decision structures. The Council has commissioned large fire cost reviews that are resulting in changes in how incidents are managed by DOI and the Forest Service. For example, incident business managers are now assigned to assist incident commanders on all large fires. Cost containment guidelines have now been incorporated into the annual operations plan for firefighting. These large fire cost reviews will continue in 2005 and 2006.





Costs prior to 2004 are adjusted for inflation.

In response to the widespread concern over high fire suppression costs, WFLC chartered an interagency Strategic Issues Panel to examine fire suppression costs. The report *Large Fire Suppression Costs – Strategies for Cost Management*, provided findings and recommendations to the Council for consideration. The panel recommended seven primary actions. The WFLC will develop an action plan to implement those recommendations it deems to be feasible and practical.

- Increase the level of accountability and interest for large fire costs and their impacts by allocating suppression funds on a regional or equivalent basis.
- Set policy and direction on agency land resource management planning to incorporate cost management on large wildfires.
- Plan, budget, and manage resources effectively for large fire suppression such that resources for effective initial response and extended attack are not compromised.
- Initial response to unplanned and unwanted wildfires should always be aggressive and driven by the principle of utilizing the closest appropriate resources, including local government.
- Incorporate fuels management and future fire management cost considerations when planning all resource management projects for public and private lands.
- Commit to improving the fire cost data infrastructure as a prerequisite step toward improving accountability and strengthening fire management performance.
- Develop and use a benefit-cost measure as the core measure of suppression cost effectiveness.

During 2005, the Forest Service and DOI will begin work on a strategic plan for aviation support resources. The need for a comprehensive interagency strategic plan has been made apparent by the findings of recent reports, safety issues, and rising aviation costs. A blue ribbon panel in 2002 recommended actions that led to the cancellation of contracts for two models of airtankers, the development of inspection and maintenance criteria for large airtankers by the Sandia National Laboratory, and reduced use of airtankers beginning in 2003. An April 2003 report by the National Transportation Safety Board determined that there was currently no method to assure the airworthiness of large fixed-wing airtankers for wildland firefighting missions. This report led the Forest Service to remove 33 such airtankers from use in 2004. The costs for aviation support have risen dramatically in recent years, far outpacing any inflation index. DOI saw its annual contract costs rise from \$10.8 million in 2000 to nearly \$18 million in 2004; and these costs do not include the actual airtime mission costs which increased by \$5 million in 2004 to pay for replacement aircraft to fill the gap caused by the loss of the large airtankers.

The comprehensive strategic plan will be preceded by a bridging plan in 2005 that will deal specifically with issues arising out of the removal from wildland firefighting of large fixed-wing airtankers. The bridging plan will address those conditions and options for the use of alternative aircraft including military resources, helitankers, single-engine airtankers, and other airtanker models.

**Activity-Based Cost Management (ABC)** – The Wildland Fire Management program participated in a pilot test of ABC in early 2003. The results of the pilot guided the Department in the selection of workload activities that were implemented in 2004. ABC will provide additional information that will be used to inform future management decisions. Specifically, DOI has established activity codes for each of the six major hazardous fuels reduction treatment categories (see the following table). These are the same categories by which future treatments are classified, proposed, approved, and budgeted. Actual cost and performance data will be available with which to evaluate program performance in the future. Accurate costs for these activities were unobtainable prior to 2004.

By comparing performance plan and accomplishment data in the National Fire Plan Operating and Reporting System (NFPORS) with ABC data, the Department will be able to evaluate the actual costs for different types of treatments and help the program determine the relative cost effectiveness of the different types of hazardous fuels reduction treatments. This data will enable fuels managers to make better treatment decisions as the body of matched accomplishment and cost data grows.

### Activity-Based Cost Management in Wildland Fire Management

<u>Budget Activity</u>	<u>ABC Work Activity</u>
Preparedness	Prepare Fire Management Plans Provide Community Assistance Construct and Maintain Facilities (DOI-wide work activity) Prepare for Wildland Fires
Suppression Operations	Suppress Wildland Fires Stabilize Burned Areas
Other Operations	Provide Community Assistance Wildland-urban interface – prescribed fire treatments Wildland-urban interface – mechanical treatments Wildland-urban interface – other (e.g. chemical) treatments Non-wildland-urban interface – prescribed fire treatments Non-wildland-urban interface – mechanical treatments Non-wildland-urban interface – other (e.g. chemical) treatments Rehabilitate Lands Damaged by Wildfire Monitor and Evaluate Treatments

Another benefit of ABC will be the costing for monitoring and evaluation of fuels reduction and burned area rehabilitation treatments. The budget structure groups these costs by program activity only. ABC enables the bureaus to record the costs associated with monitoring of both fuels reduction and rehabilitation. The 2005 appropriation includes \$4.0 million for monitoring the effectiveness and consequences of hazardous fuels reduction treatments.

**Strategic Management of Human Capital** - The Department continues to face management challenges resulting from vacancies in key positions, both on and off the fire line, and the small pool of qualified candidates available to fill some of the most critical positions. Much of the current management contingent is at or nearing retirement age. The vacancy problem is particularly evident in the fire management officer, assistant fire management officer, engine supervisor, crew boss, incident commander and team member, engine operator, and other leadership positions. There are not enough qualified candidates in the pipeline today to assume all of the crucial management and leadership roles. The future effectiveness of the program and safety of the general firefighting workforce depend upon the training and preparation of qualified candidates for these jobs. The Wildland Fire Management program has established an inter-bureau working group to establish employee development pipelines to ensure that a constant pool of competent, trained, and experienced people are available for advancement in the future.

In 2005, the Department will initiate implementation of the Interagency Fire Management Program Qualifications Standards and Guide that was completed in 2004. The 2005 program will continue current efforts to provide enhanced training and career advancement opportunities through the training academies and targeted programs such as the Wildland Fire Apprenticeship Program and the Technical Fire Management Program.

The 2005 appropriation includes funding for implementing a curriculum for professional fuels management specialists. Today, effective fuels management specialists need to possess skills and knowledge beyond the ability to manage the removal of fuels by prescribed fire, mechanical, or other means. Fuels management specialists also need to understand and be able to apply NEPA and ESA regulations; communicate and negotiate effectively with many diverse interests; and, develop treatment plans that achieve resource goals in collaboration with the affected communities and other partners. Advanced training courses that support the President's Healthy Forests Initiative will be conducted at the Prescribed Fire Training Center in Tallahassee, Florida and the Fire Use Training Academy in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In addition to those two centers, intermediate level courses are taught at these other venues:

Northern Rockies Training Center in Missoula, Montana  
Great Basin Training Center in Boise, Idaho  
Pacific Northwest Training Center in Redmond, Washington  
McClellan Training Center in Sacramento, California  
Other locations (including states and The Nature Conservancy)

**Competitive Sourcing** – As one of the five elements of the President's Management Agenda, competitive sourcing can be used to provide better customer service to American citizens by improving how government works. Competitive Sourcing is the process by which commercial-type activities currently being performed by the government are evaluated, re-engineered for efficiency, and where appropriate offered to the private sector for bidding on a competitive basis in order to ensure that customers, stakeholders, and citizens are provided services at the best possible value.

Under the provisions of the *FAIR Act (P.L. 105-270)*, each agency must annually provide the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) with a list of the commercial functions performed that are not inherently governmental. The definitions that lead to designations of "commercial" and "inherently governmental" are published by OMB and applied across all government agencies.

The draft DOI competitive sourcing plan (aka the "Green" Plan) includes 1,400 FTE for potential study in FY 2007 and FY 2008 that are either fire FTE or those that support the fire program. These numbers could change based on the results of the annual Green Plan update completed in August each year.

The WFM program is unique in the government in that it is not only inter-Departmental (DOI and USDA), but is also carried out by four separate bureaus with diverse missions within DOI. In a bureau-specific study, the functions and positions to be studied are selected at the bureau level. However, with the inter-Departmental fire program, any study must be undertaken at the program level across bureau lines. While no decisions have yet been made as to which fire program positions could be included in a competitive sourcing study, some factors to be considered include:

- safety
- leadership succession
- unusually large number of vacancies
- activity that has previously been successfully outsourced
- existing private sector resources to perform the activity, and
- budget constraints.

In 2004, the Wildland Fire Management Career Group produced *The FY 2004-FY 2009 Human Capital Workforce Plan*. A survey to collect data for this plan found that over the last five years, WFM program work has evolved to require less emphasis on the “militia” workforce and a higher emphasis on technical and administrative skills. One reason for the shift is the growing wildland urban interface, where hazardous fuels reduction efforts require professionals with a different mix of skills. Successful work in the interface requires collaboration with local citizens and organizations, careful planning and documentation, and effective project management and oversight. These highly trained fuels management professionals both carry out projects with the Federal workforce and administer fuels treatment contracts through outsourcing.

The Wildland Fire Management program has used outsourcing successfully for about 35 years for concessions, supplies and services (including extended attack fire suppression). More recently, under the National Fire Plan both DOI and FS have committed to outsource at least 50% of hazardous fuels reduction treatments. For FY 2004, DOI outsourced over 55% of non-WUI and over 64% of WUI fuels treatment projects. Maintaining a core cadre of trained federal professionals while continuing to support local communities near lands managed by the Department will provide continuity and future leadership to the WFM program, as approximately 80% of the program leadership will be eligible for retirement within the next five years.

Stewardship End Results Contracting is becoming an integral component of the Department’s efforts to improve forest and woodland health and fuels management practices. The BLM, which received legal authority for stewardship contracting in 2003, offered 34 contracts or agreements and awarded 22 of them in 2004. In 2005, the Bureau has a target of 70 new stewardship contracts plus 8 carryover projects from 2004.

**Financial Performance** – In 2005 the WFM program will build upon the enormous recent strides to improve the financial management of the program. First, the Forest Service and Interior will implement the budget structure approved by Congress in the 2005 appropriation.

The Department of the Interior is seeking further refinement of the new structure that will more closely tie the work activities and performance goals of the fire management program. The proposed change from the current budget structure is small, but significant. DOI seeks the elevation of Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Burned Area Rehabilitation to budget activity status, befitting their importance to the restoration goals of the Department. The elevation of Hazardous Fuels Reduction is especially important because it will enable the Department to establish subactivities for WUI and non-WUI Hazardous Fuels Reduction – an essential step in improved financial accountability.

The budget also seeks to return Fire Facilities and the Joint Fire Science Program to subactivities under Preparedness as well as the elimination of the State and Local Assistance budget subactivity, as this grants program is proposed for discontinuation.

### Current and Proposed Budget Structures

Current	Proposed
Activity/ Subactivity	Activity/ Subactivity
<b>Preparedness</b>	<b>Preparedness</b>
	Readiness
	Fire Facilities
	Joint Fire Science
<b>Suppression Operations</b>	<b>Suppression Operations</b>
<b>Other Operations</b>	
Hazardous Fuels Reduction	<b>Hazardous Fuels Reduction</b>
Fire Facilities	WUI Fuels Reduction
Joint Fire Science	Non-WUI Fuels Reduction
Burned Area Rehabilitation	<b>Burned Area Rehabilitation</b>
Rural Fire Assistance	

The second major financial performance improvement, as discussed previously, is that activity based cost management was implemented in 2004 to enable the Department and program managers to determine the full cost of conducting the various fire management activities. In 2005, lessons learned in 2004 will be applied.

Another major step taken by the Forest Service and DOI in 2004 was the development of a common cost coding system for all large fire suppression incidents. The fire code system replaced five different incident coding schemes formerly used by the fire management agencies.

Finally, the program expects that lessons learned from Large Incident Strategic Decision and Assessment Oversight Reviews, begun in 2003, will help reduce the costs of responding to wildfires. Large fire reviews were conducted in the 2003 and 2004 fire seasons. The review teams examined all the incident response costs including fire planning, labor, supplies, aviation support, contract crews and engines, and vendor support. The fire management agencies have already adopted several changes in procedures resulting from the findings from these reviews. Incident Commanders are now required to consider the least cost alternative when determining firefighting strategies. Incident management teams must include an incident business manager on all large fires. The Wildland Fire Situation Analysis process has been improved to make it better suited for complex or multiple fires.

**Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART)** – The WFM program was the subject of one of the first seven PART reviews conducted in Interior in 2002. The principal PART findings for Wildland Fire Management were:

- The purpose and design of the program is clear and well focused.
- The cost of responding to fires is rapidly rising and no systematic cost containment strategy is in place to track and control firefighting efficiency.
- The program cannot demonstrate that fuels reduction activities are adequately targeted and efficiently managed.
- The long-term goals developed as part of the 10-Year Fire Strategy still require baseline data, annual and long-term targets, and clear prioritization among the four goals and 18 measures.

The review included the following recommendations for the Wildland Fire Management program.

1. Improving accountability for firefighting costs and ensuring that states are paying their fair share of such costs.
2. Developing a new fire preparedness model that focuses on efficient allocation of available resources.
3. Establishing project criteria to ensure hazardous fuels reduction funds are targeted as effectively as possible to reduce risk to communities in the WUI.

Based on these PART findings and recommendations, the Administration has implemented management actions for improvements in the fire program:

- Cost containment reviews are now conducted at major fires. These interagency reviews identify areas where costs can be constrained without compromising firefighting safety or effectiveness. As a result of the first reviews in 2003, the Wildland Fire Leadership Council called for a blue ribbon panel to investigate and report on the major factors causing high fire suppression costs. Their report to the Council was published in August 2004. The WFM program is now beginning to implement the report recommendations (refer to the previous cost containment discussion).
- The establishment of burned area rehabilitation as a unique program with a full-time inter-bureau leadership team will also improve fire cost control. In the past, rehabilitation costs were grouped with emergency stabilization and were funded partially by Section 102 transfers. Beginning in 2004, rehabilitation projects and treatments were subject to the same kind of project nomination, prioritization, and selection processes as hazardous fuels reduction treatments.
- Another joint FS-DOI agreement has resulted in the establishment of a common cost code for every fire incident that will be used by every responding Federal agency. For the first time, accurate fire response cost data are available for individual fire events. This will be especially helpful in responding to queries about the costs for specific large fires. In 2005, DOI is investigating the I-Suite system used by the Forest Service to estimate, track, and report the costs of large fires more rapidly.
- In 2005, the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior are implementing the first module of a fire preparedness planning tool to identify an optimal mix of resources (firefighters, engines, etc.) for any given level of funding.
- Interdepartmental project criteria were established to ensure that hazardous fuels reduction funds are targeted as effectively as possible to reduce risks to communities in the wildland-urban interface. The National Fire Plan Operating and Reporting System (NFPORS) was deployed in 2003 as the Federal fire management system for proposing projects for fuels reduction. Project leaders provide data on the location, type (WUI or non-WUI), acreage, and treatment method (mechanical, prescribed fire, other) that are used by program managers to decide which projects are to receive priority for available funding. The 2006 budget proposes an increase of \$10.3 million for fuels reduction treatments.

- Baseline data has been established for most of the fire management performance measures in the Department's Strategic Plan. These measures are included in tables throughout this budget request. Some of the measures, however, have not been implemented because they are broader than traditional fire management record keeping (e.g. estimates of economic damage caused by wildfire) or they require study and analysis by outside experts.

**Capital Asset Planning and Control** – The Wildland Fire Management program information technology investments are managed through the DOI and OMB Capital Planning and Investment Control (CPIC) process. In addition to the annual OMB review, the WFM business cases are updated and reviewed by DOI quarterly to ensure good project management, that budget and performance goals are on schedule, and that IT investments continue to meet mission needs and remain compliant with the DOI Wildland Fire Management Modernization Blueprint. The blueprint is the DOI WFM enterprise architecture target environment. As proposed by the blueprint, high-level portfolio management will incorporate the WFM IT investment business cases into one WFM “capstone” business case for presentation to OMB.

The National Wildland Fire Enterprise Architecture Steering Group was recently chartered to direct and oversee the development of a collaborative national enterprise architecture for Wildland Fire Management. The steering group is comprised of business and technical representatives from DOI, the USDA, the Department of Homeland Security, the National Association of State Foresters, and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). The NWCG has leadership responsibilities for the steering group and directs the position of National Wildland Fire Enterprise Architecture Project Manager.

**Data Validation and Verification** - The integrity, availability, and confidentiality of data is required for accurate high-level decision-making and program management of Wildland Fire Management. The Department has made significant progress in safeguarding its information assets. The 2004 Congressional Security Scorecard reports show that DOI is making progress in security readiness to fully meet the tenets of the *Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) of 2002* and OMB Circular A-130. DOI manages data and infrastructure security at both the Bureau and the Departmental levels through organizational practices to achieve certification and accreditations on all major and interagency IT investments. The plans of actions and milestones are updated and monitored quarterly and mandatory security awareness training appropriate to system access rights is conducted and tracked annually and as user accounts are created. Contingency plans are documented and tested to provide continuation of operations if natural or manmade disasters occur. The DOI capital planning process ensures that good system security and data integrity is implemented for all IT investments. IT investments are only approved for projects with an excellent security rating.

Wildland Fire Management IT investments undergo the same rigorous security checks as required for non-fire systems. Access to networks and system data is managed through appropriate levels of system user account management which includes encrypted user-IDs and passwords. As appropriate, systems provide data-range validation as data is input and edited. There is continued progress in sharing data among systems. The Wildland Fire Management Modernization Blueprint maps significant system and data integration for both consistent mission use and data security. The “enter once, use many” methodology ensures consistent data across the Wildland Fire Management line of business.



In addition to the compliance with the OMB and FISMA requirements, the data contained in the programmatic support systems undergoes continual vigilant data validation and verification. For example, the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS) has a multi-tiered data validation and verification process that includes the use of automated tools and subject matter experts. The data is validated through automated value and range checking at the time of data entry, as well as validating content for information conflicts at the record level. The fact that all of the data entry is done at the field management level of the business and is therefore "deductive" in its nature (specific to general) adds to the quality of data verification. NFPORS provides monthly training for users and has a full-time help desk. There is also on-line documentation that includes definitions and procedures. NFPORS also contains a data checking tool that is run on a schedule and scans the entire database for inconsistencies, data range checks, and scope of data. There is a robust reporting system which also provides ad-hoc reporting capability. In addition, NFPORS produces summary screens which show programmatic data crosswalks. Management and staff subject matter experts use these standard, customized, and summary reports daily. When experts in their field see a report that is questionable, a validation business process is employed that goes down to the field-level subject matter experts for verification of the data. As a result of the robust validation and verification process, the reports produce reliable performance measures that enables better business decisions by all levels of program management.

## **PERFORMANCE SUMMARY**

The Wildland Fire Management program supports both the Serving Communities and Resource Protection goals of the Department, although its predominant contribution is to Serving Communities.

### **Serving Communities**

More than 85% of the Wildland Fire Management appropriation supports the goal of Serving Communities. Fire preparedness, suppression, and hazardous fuels reduction in the WUI all support this goal.

**Hazardous Fuel Reduction** – The Department has been making steady progress in reducing hazardous fuels in the WUI. The number of acres treated around and near communities at risk from wildfire has nearly tripled from 164,337 in 2001, to 490,110 in 2004. These treatments support the long-term goal of improving fire prevention and suppression so that losses of life are eliminated, and firefighter injuries and damage to communities are reduced. Along with the increase in acres treated has come an increase in local collaboration to identify and prioritize areas in need of hazardous fuel reduction. This priority-setting process ensures that fiscal investments are focused on areas that will yield the greatest risk mitigation and environmental benefits. Increases in training, administrative efficiencies, and the resulting growth of expertise will improve community protection from the risk of catastrophic wildfire. Emphasis will be on early and frequent collaboration with all members of the public and the application of the best science in choosing and designing fuels hazard reduction projects. The long-term results of treating these acres will be a reduction in the severity of wildfires, with a corresponding decrease in the number of homes lost and an increase in firefighter and public safety. This increase in acres treated will also result in the protection of critical natural resource values, such as threatened or endangered species habitat, critical watersheds, and valuable riparian areas.

**Fire Preparedness and Suppression** – All the preparation possible cannot prevent all forest and rangeland fires. Therefore, the fire management agencies must be prepared to respond quickly and effectively to unplanned and unwanted wildfires that occur in places and under circumstances that are conducive to catastrophic fire. A high percent of unplanned and unwanted wildfires controlled during initial attack is one of the key performance measures for achieving the strategy of improving fire management. The Department's 98% rate in containing fires upon initial attack on DOI-managed lands in 2004 is evidence of the effectiveness of successful preparedness. The initial attack success rate has improved significantly under the National Fire Plan – up from 92% in 2000. This budget strikes a balance between funding for Preparedness and Suppression that will ensure a 95 percent or better initial attack success rate without spending for unnecessary firefighting capacity.

### **Resource Protection**

The Wildland Fire Management program supports the Resource Protection goal in two fundamental ways. First, the program seeks to prevent catastrophic wildfires in forests, rangelands, parks, and other lands managed by Interior through fuels reduction treatments. Fuels treatments outside the WUI are planned to strategically target areas where overgrown, diseased, or dead vegetation presents a high risk of unwanted and uncontrollable wildfires. By removing excess fuels through prescribed fire, mechanical removal, or treatment with herbicides, lands are returned to a condition that can withstand and benefit from periodic fires. Periodic cleansing fires serve to return desirable vegetation, protect watersheds, and produce better wildlife habitats. Returning normal fire regimes to an area enhances biological diversity and maintains social and economic values, while reducing the threats posed by devastating fires, subsequent floods, sedimentation, water degradation, and invasive species.

Hazardous fuels reduction treatments in forests, rangelands, and other public lands that are outside the WUI are conducted to create or restore fire-adapted conditions. Fuels reduction treatments conducted for resource benefits also reduce the likelihood that subsequent wildfires will expand to threaten communities, secondarily supporting the goal of Serving Communities. Beginning in 2004, the relevant performance measure includes those acres that have been converted to a higher condition class. The program anticipates that 40 percent of the 575,000 acres of non-WUI fuels treatments estimated for 2006 will be moved to a higher condition class. This compares to the 2004 actual of 38 percent.

The second WFM program that supports the Resource Protection goal is Burned Area Rehabilitation. Land that has been burned by high intensity wildfire is often burned to the ground, denuded of all vegetation, and the soil organic layer destroyed. Many places cannot recover naturally from such devastation. After emergency stabilization actions have been put in place, WFM agencies select critical portions of such burned areas to begin the rehabilitation and restoration process. Native and other desirable species are planted so that conditions favorable to the resource management goals for the land can be restored. Among these goals are fire adaptation, water quality, wildlife habitat, economic value, and control of invasive species. Rehabilitation activities are conducted for the period beginning in the year following the fire and ending three years after fire containment. Further restoration of the lands and resources after three years is funded by bureau resource management and operations accounts. A core group of four national level policy and management professionals from each of the fire management bureaus now provides guidance and oversight for ongoing year-round rehabilitation work on a Department-wide basis. Prior to 2004, ESR was managed as a part-time collateral duty for operations, fuels, and resource staffs. As a result of its secondary status it did not receive the management priority necessary to ensure program effectiveness and cost efficiency.

**SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS (Base Program)**  
(\$000)

Comparison by Activity/Subactivity		2004 Actual	2005 Estimate	Uncontrol- lable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2006 Budget Request	Inc(+) Dec(-) from 2005
<b>Preparedness</b>	\$	<b>254,180</b>	<b>258,939</b>	<b>+7,029</b>	<b>+6,884</b>	<b>272,852</b>	<b>+13,913</b>
	FTE	<b>2,881</b>	<b>2,642</b>			<b>2,642</b>	
<b>Suppression Operations</b>	\$	<b>192,903</b>	<b>218,445</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>+15,722</b>	<b>234,167</b>	<b>+15,722</b>
	FTE	<b>426</b>	<b>426</b>			<b>426</b>	
<b>Other Operations</b>	\$	<b>238,093</b>	<b>255,300</b>	<b>+2,173</b>	<b>-7,928</b>	<b>249,545</b>	<b>-5,755</b>
	FTE	<b>1,507</b>	<b>1,522</b>			<b>1,522</b>	
Hazardous Fuels Reduction	\$	183,896	201,409	+1,973	+7,838	211,220	+9,811
	FTE	1,452	1,467			1,467	
Burned Area Rehabilitation	\$	24,198	23,939	+200	+537	24,476	+537
	FTE	44	44			44	
Fire Facilities	\$	12,222	12,202		-4,353	7,849	-4,353
	FTE	7	7			7	
Joint Fire Science	\$	7,901	7,889		-1,989	6,000	-1,989
	FTE	4	4			4	
Rural Fire Assistance	\$	9,877	9,861		-9,861	0	-9,861
	FTE	0	0			0	
<b>Total, Wildland Fire Management</b>	\$	<b>685,177</b>	<b>732,684</b>	<b>+9,202</b>	<b>+14,678</b>	<b>756,564</b>	<b>+23,880</b>
	FTE	<b>4,814</b>	<b>4,590</b>			<b>4,590</b>	

The base funding reflected in this table excludes 2004 and 2005 supplemental and contingent appropriations for suppression and repayments of amounts borrowed from other accounts.

### Justification of Uncontrollable and Related Changes (\$000)

	2005 BUDGET CHANGE	2005 REVISED CHANGE	2006 CHANGE
<b>Additional Operational Costs from 2005 to 2006 January Pay Raises:</b>			
2005 Pay Raise	\$2,125	\$2,125	\$3,177
Amount of pay raise absorbed	[\$2,124]	[\$8,292]	
2006 Pay Raise			\$6,252
These adjustments are for an additional amount needed in 2006 to fund the remaining 3-month portion of the estimated cost of the, on average, 3.5 percent pay increases effective in January 2005 and the additional costs of funding for an estimated 2.3 percent January 2006 pay increase for GS-series employees and the associated pay rate changes made in other pay series.			
<b>Other Uncontrollable Cost Changes:</b>			
Employer Share of Federal Health Benefit Plans	\$583	\$583	\$1,368
Amount of health benefit costs absorbed	[\$582]	[\$582]	
One Less Paid Workday	-\$1,468	-\$1,468	-\$1,595
<b>Total Request</b>	<b>\$2,691</b>	<b>\$2,691</b>	<b>\$9,202</b>

### Wildland Fire Management FTE Allocations

	2004 Actual	2005 Estimate	2006 Estimate
Direct Total Compensable Work Years, BLM FTEs	2,741	2,607	2,607
Reimbursable Total Compensable Work Years, BLM FTEs	69	69	69
Allocations to NPS, FWS, BIA, and OS (excluded from above)	2,073	1,983	1,983
Total, Wildland Fire Management	4,883	4,659	4,659

**WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT  
PERFORMANCE SUMMARY  
DOI STRATEGIC PLAN MEASURES**

Budget Activity/ Subactivity	DOI Strategic Goal: Resource Protection							
	<b>End Outcome Goal: Improve health of watersheds, landscapes, and marine resources that are DOI managed or influenced in a manner consistent with obligations regarding the allocation and use of water</b>							
	<b>Strategy: Restore and maintain proper function to watersheds and landscapes</b>							
	<b>Intermediate strategy: Restore fire-adapted ecosystems</b>							
	Measures	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Actual	FY 2005 Planned Budget Justifications	FY 2005 Revised Plan	FY 2006 Planned	Change in Performance (FY 2005 to 2006)	Long Term Target FY 2008
Other Operations/ Hazardous Fuels Reduction (Non- WUI)	Percent of acres degraded by wildland fire with post-fire rehabilitation treatments underway, completed, or monitored	2,360,934/ 7,357,000 = 32%	827,045/ 4,808,000 = 17%	1,520,000/ 8,090,000 = 19%	1,347,000/ 6,634,000 = 20%	1,347,000/ 6,634,000 = 20%	0%	1,347,000/ 6,634,000 = 20%
Other Operations/ Hazardous Fuels Reduction (Non- WUI)	Number of acres in fire regimes 1, 2, or 3 moved to a better condition class that were identified as high priority through collaboration consistent with the 10-year Implementation Plan – in total	279,188	294,000	285,000	259,000	230,000	-29,000	250,000
Other Operations/ Hazardous Fuels Reduction (Non- WUI)	Number of acres in fire regimes 1, 2, or 3 moved to a better condition class that were identified as high priority through collaboration consistent with the 10-year Implementation Plan – as a percent of total acres treated	279,188/ 778,727 = 36%	294,000/ 771,000 = 38%	285,000/ 723,000 = 39%	259,000/ 647,000 = 40%	230,000/ 575,000 = 40%	0%	250,000/ 500,000 = 50%
Other Operations/ Hazardous Fuels Reduction (Non- WUI)	Number of acres in prior measure moved to a better condition class per million dollars of gross investment	279,188/ \$86.64M = 3,222	294,000/ \$80.08 = 3,671	285,000/ \$74.17 = 3,843	259,000/ \$73.11 = 3,543	230,000/ \$77.73 = 2,959	-584	250,000/ \$75.00 = 3,333
	<b>Intermediate strategy: Reduce hazardous fuels</b>							

	Measures	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Actual	FY 2005 Planned Budget Justifications	FY 2005 Revised Plan	FY 2006 Planned	Change in Performance (FY 2005 to 2006)	Long Term Target FY 2008
Other Operations/ Hazardous Fuels Reduction (Non-WUI)	Number of acres treated that are in condition classes 2 or 3 in fire regimes 1 through 3 outside of wildland-urban interface, and are identified as high priority through collaboration consistent with the 10-Yr. Implementation Plan-in total	468,288	494,000	440,000	420,000	373,000	-47,000	335,000
Other Operations/ Hazardous Fuels Reduction (Non-WUI)	Number of acres treated that are in condition classes 2 or 3 in fire regimes 1 through 3 outside of wildland-urban interface, and are identified as high priority through collaboration consistent with the 10-Yr. Implementation Plan - as a percent of all acres treated	468,288/ 778,727 = 60%	494,000/ 771,000 = 64%	440,000/ 723,000 = 61%	420,000/ 647,000 = 65%	373,000/ 575,000 = 65%	0%	350,000/ 500,000 = 70%
Other Operations/ Hazardous Fuels Reduction (Non-WUI)	Number of acres treated outside the wildland-urban interface per million dollars gross investment +	778,727/ \$86.64M = 8,988	771,000/ \$80.08M = 9,628	723,000/ \$74.17M = 9,748	647,000/ \$73.11M = 8,850	575,000/ \$77.73M = 7,397	-1,453	500,000/ \$75.00M = 6,667
Budget Activity/ Subactivity	<b>DOI Strategic Goal: Serve Communities</b>							
	<b>End Outcome Goal: Protect lives, resources and property</b>							
	Measures	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Actual	FY 2005 Planned Budget Justifications	FY 2005 Revised Plan	FY 2006 Planned	Change in Performance (FY 2005 to 2006)	Long Term Target FY 2008
Preparedness & Fire Suppression Operations	Loss of life from severe, unplanned and unwanted wildland fire is eliminated <u>A/</u>	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Preparedness & Fire Suppression Operations	Firefighter injuries from severe, unplanned and unwanted wildland fire are reduced	NA	414	0	0	0	0	0
Preparedness & Fire Suppression Operations	Damage to communities and the environment from severe, unplanned and unwanted wildland fire are reduced <u>B/</u>	UNK	UNK	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

Preparedness & Fire Suppression Operations	Amount of time lost from firefighter injury in proportion to the number of days worked across all agencies	NA	1,383.25/ 2,758,577 = 0.05%	1,383.25/ 2,758,577 = 0.05%	1,383.25/ 2,758,577 = 0.05%	1,383.25/ 2,758,577 = 0.05%	0	1,383.25/ 2,758,577 = 0.05%
Preparedness & Fire Suppression Operations	Number of homes and significant structures lost as a result of wildland fire	4,090	104	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
<b>Strategy: Improve fire management</b>								
<b>Intermediate Strategy: Improve fire prevention and suppression</b>								
	Measures	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Actual	FY 2005 Planned Budget Justifications	FY 2005 Revised Plan	FY 2006 Planned	Change in Performance (FY 2005 to 2006)	Long Term Target FY 2008
Preparedness & Fire Suppression Operations	Percent of unplanned and unwanted wildland fires controlled during initial attack	97.5%	98.4%	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%	0.0%	95.0%
Preparedness & Fire Suppression Operations	Number of acres burned by unplanned and unwanted wildland fires <u>C/</u>	3,959,223	8,094,531	4,797,962	5,135,013	5,135,013	0	5,135,013
<b>Intermediate Strategy: Reduce hazardous fuels</b>								
Other Operations/ Hazardous Fuels Reduction (WUI)	Number of acres treated that are in the wildland-urban interface and are identified as high priority through collaboration consistent with the 10-Year Implementation Plan - in total	480,110	490,110	377,000	421,000	479,000	58,000	500,000
Other Operations/ Hazardous Fuels Reduction (WUI)	Number of acres treated that are in the wildland-urban interface and are identified as high priority through collaboration consistent with the 10-Year Implementation Plan - as X percent of all acres treated	480,110/ 1,258,837 = 38%	490,110/ 1,261,110 = 39%	377,000/ 1,100,000 = 34%	421,000/ 1,068,000 = 39%	479,000/ 1,054,000 = 45%	14%	500,000/ 1,000,000 = 50%
Other Operations/ Hazardous Fuels Reduction (WUI)	Number of acres treated in the wildland-urban interface per million dollars gross investment	480,110/ \$154.00M = 3,118	490,110/ \$115.38M = 4,248	377,000/ \$135.10M = 2,791	421,000/ \$128.3M = 3,281	479,000/ \$133.46M = 3,589	308	500,000/ \$135.00M = 3,704

A/ The goal for loss of life is always zero because firefighter and public safety is the highest priority core value of the Wildland Fire Management program.

B/ Among the major goals for the Wildland Fire Management program are to lose no homes to wildfire and to prevent damage to communities and the environment. Numerical expressions of those goals have not been developed.

C/ The numbers of acres burned are national totals, not just those on Interior-managed lands because DOI firefighters participate in fire suppression actions on all lands, whether Federal, State, Tribal or privately-owned.

## ACTIVITY: WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS

(\$000)

		2004 Actual	2005 Estimate	Uncontrol- lable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2006 Budget Request	Inc(+) Dec(-) From 2005
Preparedness	\$	254,180	258,939	+7,029	+6,884	272,852	+13,913
	FTE	2,881	2,642			2,642	
BLM	\$	142,848	148,566	+3,850	+6,129	158,535	+9,979
	FTE	1,702	1,560			1,560	
BIA	\$	51,956	51,363	+1,324	+232	52,919	+1,556
	FTE	473	434			434	
FWS	\$	26,305	26,190	+719	+232	27,141	+951
	FTE	259	237			237	
NPS	\$	31,276	31,585	+1,117	+291	32,993	+1,408
	FTE	441	404			404	
OS	\$	1,795	1,235	+19	0	1,254	+19
	FTE	6	7			7	

### ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

This activity funds the non-emergency and predictable aspects of the Department's wildland fire program. Preparedness includes readiness, operational planning, oversight, procurement, contracting, training, supervision, and deployment of wildland fire suppression personnel and equipment prior to wildland fire occurrence. It also includes activities related to program monitoring and evaluation, integration of fire into land-use planning, and interagency coordination and direction.

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The goal of wildland fire preparedness is to achieve the most cost-efficient and technically effective fire management program level that meets resource objectives while minimizing costs of suppression and resource damages.

Part of the Department of the Interior's mission and strategic vision is to protect property and resources from the destructive effects of wildland fires while providing for firefighter and public safety. To accomplish this mission, the Department of the Interior bureaus fund preparedness activities on over 500 million acres of public lands consisting of 262 million acres of BLM lands (2.6 million acres of which are Oregon and California Grant Lands, Coos Bay Wagon Road Lands and intermingled public lands in western Oregon), 84 million acres of National Park



Service land, 96 million acres of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands, and 56 million acres of Bureau of Indian Affairs Trust lands. As part of this coverage, whenever efficiencies can be gained and/or costs reduced, the Department of the Interior bureaus enter into cooperative agreements with other Federal agencies as well as State, tribal, and local governments. Under these arrangements, protection responsibilities are exchanged and scarce resources shared.

All Wildland Fire Management activities within the Department are guided by Fire Management Plans that cover planned contributions for interagency-shared resources, training, prevention, wildland fire preparedness staffing, detection, and equipment, as well as the appropriate response to wildland fire to meet land use plan objectives. Currently, each bureau focuses primarily on the internal needs of each land management unit for fire program management and initial attack suppression readiness. When the Fire Program Analysis program is implemented, readiness resource needs will be determined on an interagency basis across each fire planning unit.

Readiness resources are deployed in advance of fire emergencies based on an analysis of historic needs to ensure Department of the Interior bureaus' readiness to respond when fires occur. Department of the Interior agencies carry out WFM responsibilities in national parks, in wildlife refuges and preserves, on Indian reservations, and on BLM public lands, including historic and cultural sites, commercial forests, rangelands, as well as on some lands managed by other Federal and State agencies. Fire prevention and suppression are provided by Federal fire crews and through cooperative protection exchanges and contracts with other Federal and State agencies, and self-governing Tribes.

The Department maintains a target success rate of 95% for containing fires on initial attack because the marginal costs to prepare to stop nearly 100% of fires on initial attack would be prohibitive and could be better spent on other activities such as hazardous fuel reduction.

Program management resources include permanent and career seasonal professional and technical personnel who provide leadership, coordination, program planning, and technical and administrative support for fire and aviation management. It also includes permanent, career seasonal and temporary employees involved in dispatching, warehouse, and other support functions.

National capabilities include unit-level requirements, plus national resources such as hotshot crews that are available for large fires on all Federal lands regardless of ownership. Economically efficient fire management requires that the Department of the Interior bureaus pool their resources to manage large project fires. Therefore, resources that are used primarily for large, interagency efforts are collectively identified within the readiness process. Such resources include air tankers and retardant bases, lead planes, hotshot crews, smokejumpers, large transport planes, and fire weather technical support.

The BLM, in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, the National Weather Service, and the other DOI bureaus, hosts the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho. NIFC provides logistic support by mobilizing and coordinating the movement of wildland fire resources when the existing capability in geographic areas is exceeded, or when States and other countries request assistance. In addition to its logistical coordination role, NIFC is also the home for one of the eleven national fire caches for supplies and equipment. It provides the national radio cache for fire and disaster assistance and serves as the lead technical support group for communications, remote sensing, and wildland fire engine design. It also serves as

the national development center for standardized suppression, prescribed burning, prevention, and management courses, and is the home for the Great Basin Smokejumpers.

The Alaska Fire Service, located in Fairbanks, is responsible for providing wildland fire suppression services for all Department of the Interior agencies and associated Alaska Native Corporation lands in Alaska. The protected area encompasses 241 million acres.

**Fire Program Analysis (FPA)** – FPA will support the protection and management of the Nation's public lands including the wildland urban interface. This system will integrate ecological, economic and social factors to analyze and determine the most cost-effective mix of fire preparedness, fuels management, and suppression resources to meet program objectives at any budget level. FPA replaces local, unit by unit program analysis, with an analysis of interagency, landscape scale Fire Planning Units (FPU). FPA will be implemented by all Department bureaus and the Forest Service, and where appropriate will include State, Tribal, and local lands and resources to enhance the effectiveness of the analysis and the efficient use of firefighting resources. The project will use the best available peer-reviewed scientific information to support the analysis.

The first phase of FPA, optimization of initial attack resources, was completed in 2004 and is being validated and implemented in 2005. The fire program improvements identified in the preparedness analysis will be further enhanced in subsequent phases of FPA. These phases will identify the cost effectiveness of linking all fire management activities into a comprehensive analysis. Phase 2 development which is beginning in 2005, will include extended attack and large fire suppression resources (e.g. aircraft, hotshot crews) prevention, rehabilitation, and fuels reduction resources. When fully implemented in 2009, FPA will allow managers to determine the best overall mix of resources to achieve the maximum level of protection and improvement of resources per dollar invested.

**Aviation support contracts** – The Preparedness program funds the up-front guaranteed annual availability costs of aircraft contracts that ensure that aviation airplanes and helicopters will be available and ready for use during the fire season. The benefiting program (typically suppression) pays the actual flight use rates. Aviation resources include large air tankers, jump ships, helicopters, single engine air tankers (SEATs), and air attack platforms. These resources are contracted by the Department, which assumes the responsibility for ensuring that each contract is filled with a performance capable, safe aircraft at the lowest possible cost. Aircraft are positioned around the country based upon careful analysis of anticipated or actual fire occurrence needs.

## **2004 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

In 2004, the Department accomplished the following improvements for fire readiness:

- Responded to the unexpected unavailability of large fixed-wing airtankers by adding single-engine airtankers and helicopters to the aviation fleet. The reconfigured fleet was able to maintain, and even improve upon the initial attack success of previous years. In 2004, for the first time since these records have been kept, DOI bureaus and our local cooperating fire agencies contained over 98% of wildfires on DOI-managed lands on initial attack.



Type 1 helicopters like this sky crane, were used to offset the loss of the large fixed-wing airtankers in the summer of 2004. Since helicopters are more maneuverable than a fixed-wing, they can drop in a particular spot by hovering or flying slowly, or spread out a line by flying fast.

- The DOI participated, along with the Forest Service, in the management and cost reviews of Large Incident Strategic Decision and Assessment Oversight Review Teams. The purpose of these teams was to:
  - Examine strategic decisions by incident command teams in relationship to land use plans, fire management policy, and the wildland fire situation analysis.
  - Examine the delegation of authority to see if cost objectives are included and commensurate with the values to be protected.
  - Determine if the agency administrator is involved in financial oversight and strategic decisions.
  - Determine if cost saving actions have been implemented.
- Evaluate incident costs with respect to strategic decisions, political and social issues, and use of personnel and equipment.
- Report their findings so that corrective actions can be immediately implemented both locally and across the Department.
- In FY 2004, 86% of all Fire Management Plans (1,158 out of 1,340) were updated consistent with the Federal Wildland Fire Policy on all Federal WFM agencies' administrative units with burnable vegetation. These plans are being coordinated with partners across agency boundaries, on a landscape scale where possible. The remaining plans are in draft form and will be completed in 2005.
- The initial development of the FPA preparedness module was completed at the end of fiscal year 2004. In order to effectively implement the preparedness module, 147 interagency Fire Planning Units were established. These units represented partnerships among the federal fire management bureaus and states to ensure more effective utilization of combined resources and a common approach to fire management planning over broad geographic areas. These Fire Planning Units began compiling interagency databases on fire occurrence, dispatch locations, fire weather, and other information required to perform the fire planning analysis.
- Development of the new Incident Qualifications Certification System (IQCS) which began in 2000 was completed in 2004. The IQCS replaced various current systems with a single, automated performance-based job certification process. The fire organization recognizes the need for qualification standards for firefighters and others serving in suppression-related positions. These standards have been refined over the years, and are now being encompassed in the Incident Command System, which identifies positions, prerequisite training and experience.

## 2005 PLANNED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE



Safety is a core value of DOI fire managers. Fire preparedness includes ensuring protective equipment is available and that firefighters demonstrate knowledge of its use.

The National Fire Plan (NFP) will continue to provide overall direction to preparedness program activities in 2005. The 2005 Readiness budget is \$258,939,000 and 2,642 FTE for all Department of the Interior agencies that participate in Wildland Fire Preparedness.

In FY 2005, Fire Management Plans will continue to be updated or completed as necessary, consistent with the Federal Wildland Fire Policy, on all Federal WFM agencies' administrative units with burnable vegetation. These plans are being coordinated with partners across agency boundaries, on a landscape scale where possible.

**Fire readiness** - Readiness for wildland fire response will be maintained at a level sufficient to meet or exceed a 95% initial attack success rate. Strategic pre-positioning of resources, combined with advanced fire weather forecasting capabilities will ensure a high level of readiness.

### PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES, FY 2005- 2006

Resource	FY 2005 Enacted		FY 2006 Pres. Bud.	
	Number	Cost	Number	Cost
<b>Personnel</b>				
Firefighters	3,550	\$ 74,628	3,550	\$ 77,240
Smokejumpers	141	\$ 7,309	141	\$ 7,565
Type 1 Crews	25	\$ 12,500	25	\$ 12,938
Fire program & support staff	1,365	\$ 76,981	1,365	\$ 81,549
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>5,556</b>	<b>\$ 171,418</b>	<b>5,556</b>	<b>\$ 179,292</b>
<i>FTE</i>	<i>2,642</i>		<i>2,642</i>	
<b>Aviation</b>				
Airtankers (large fixed-wing)	-	\$ -	2	\$ 1,944
Airtankers (single engine)	29	\$ 3,207	46	\$ 5,966
Helicopters (National)	1	\$ 166	3	\$ 537
Helicopters	50	\$ 7,974	50	\$ 8,950
Other aircraft	29	\$ 5,572	27	\$ 5,592
<b>Total Aviation</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>\$ 17,979</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>\$ 22,989</b>
<b>Heavy Equipment</b>				
Engines	750	\$ 8,275	750	\$ 8,646
Other heavy equip. (dozers, tenders, etc.)	206	\$ 1,231	206	\$ 1,280
<b>Total Heavy Equipment</b>	<b>956</b>	<b>\$ 9,506</b>	<b>956</b>	<b>\$ 9,926</b>

**PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES, FY 2005- 2006**

Resource	FY 2005 Enacted		FY 2006 Pres. Bud.	
	Number	Cost	Number	Cost
<b>Other Direct Program Costs</b>				
Facilities construction and maintenance		\$ 12,198		\$ 7,849
Fire Caches (National)		\$ 2,992		\$ 2,750
Non-fire Personnel Costs		\$ 5,673		\$ 6,000
Joint Fire Science Program		\$ 7,888		\$ 6,000
Travel		\$ 7,500		\$ 7,000
One-time costs		\$ -		\$ -
IT Systems		\$ 5,973		\$ 5,973
Rent, Utilities, Misc. Procurement, Other		\$ 11,110		\$ 10,252
<b>Other Direct Program Costs</b>		<b>\$ 53,334</b>		<b>\$ 45,824</b>
<b>Indirect Costs (bureau overhead)</b>		<b>\$ 27,909</b>		<b>\$ 28,670</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 280,146</b>		<b>\$ 286,701</b>

\* Preparedness FTE are reduced by 239 in 2005. The number of firefighter and other personnel listed in this table do not directly correspond to FTE because many firefighters work only part of the fiscal year.

**Fire Program Analysis - Phase I** (initial response resources) of the interagency wildland fire planning and budgeting system was completed and released in October 2004. The program changes from the preparedness analysis will be phased-in over several years, guided by transition plans prepared by land managers in the Fire Planning Unit (FPU) partnerships. FPA will eventually replace the systems currently used by the fire management agencies.

Staffs in 39 of the 147 FPUs covering the entire nation were trained by December 2004. The initial 39 FPUs represent about 60 percent of the acreage managed by the federal wildland fire management agencies. The outputs from these FPUs will be used to support the formulation of the 2007 budget request. The remaining FPU staffs will receive training by the end of 2005. By the end of 2005, all FPUs will have completed the analysis and the results will be used to assist with the 2007 Preparedness budget allocation and formulation of the 2008 budget request.

Also in 2005, the scoping, conceptual architecture, and business requirements to incorporate extended attack, large fire, fuels management and other fire program functions into FPA will be completed. A dedicated FPA website (<http://FPA.NIFC.gov>) contains up to date information about the program. DOI's share of FPA development will be funded at \$4.4 million in 2005. The cost of FPA development is being shared in equal amounts by DOI and the Forest Service over the life of the project.

**Aviation support contracts** - The safety of the public and the people who risk their lives to fight fires is the highest priority of the Wildland Fire Management program. The NFP agencies are applying stronger safety standards for aircraft used in fighting wildland fires following the recommendations of a blue-ribbon panel. In 2005, the Department expects to award 109 aviation contracts at a cost of \$18.0 million. DOI will continue to rely upon Single Engine Air Tankers (SEATs) to provide the protection capability lost through the mandatory cancellation of the large air tanker contracts. These supplemental aircraft will be funded with suppression severity funds again in 2005, as in 2004.

The positioning of all aerial suppression resources is based upon ongoing in-depth analysis of the comparative effectiveness of these resources by location and against other suppression resources. The Forest Service and DOI will develop a strategic plan for the use of aviation resources in 2005. This plan may be further modified when the second phase of the Fire Planning Analysis system is implemented.

### JUSTIFICATION OF 2006 PROGRAM CHANGES

	2006 Budget Request	Program Changes (+/-)
<b>Fire Preparedness</b>	<b>272,852</b>	<b>+6,884</b>
Aviation Support	[22,989]	[+5,010]
Ready Reserve Firefighter Training	[1,874]	[+1,874]

The FY 2006 budget request for Readiness is \$272,852,000 and 2,690 FTE, a net program increase of \$6,884,000 from the 2005 enacted level. The increase consists of two components that will enable the program to achieve high initial attack success and align fire readiness resources so they can be deployed in optimal configurations. Both of these components will contribute to the desired outcomes of reductions in the loss of lives, property, and resources, fewer structures being destroyed, and enhanced public and firefighter safety. Furthermore, they will help the Department achieve meaningful suppression incident cost containment progress.

#### Aviation support contracts (+5,010,000)

The 2006 budget request for the aviation program is \$22,989,000, an increase of \$5,010,000 (up 27.9%) for fire-related aviation charges. During the 2004 fire season, the Forest Service removed 33 large air tankers from firefighting service due to findings that the safety of these aircraft could not be assured. To maintain the same level of initial attack success, the agencies reconfigured the air fleet with additional single engine air tankers (SEATs) and helicopters to replace the capacity of the unavailable large airtankers. Although some air tankers have been returned to service, the agencies expect to continue to operate in the future with fewer heavy air tankers. An increase of \$5.0 million is proposed for Preparedness to cover the 2006 cost of the reconfigured aviation fleet.



A single-engine airtanker drops retardant before an advancing range fire. An additional 17 single-engine airtankers (SEATs) were contracted by DOI for the 2004 summer fire season.

Managing the fire program is among the most challenging of all resource activities. Not only are natural resources at stake, so too are the health and safety of firefighters and communities. The safe and efficient use of aviation resources is an integral part of the Wildland Fire Management program. One hundred percent of the funding for aerial firefighting supports the DOI Strategic

Plan mission goal to serve communities, and the outcome goal to protect lives, resources and property by improving public and firefighter safety, reducing the number of homes and structures lost to wildland fire, and reducing the number of escaped fires. The aviation management program also contributes to the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan long-term goal one: Improve Fire Prevention and Suppression and the goal's long-term outcome: "Losses of life are eliminated, and firefighter injuries and damage to communities and the environment from severe, unplanned and unwanted wildland fire are reduced." These aircraft enable ground forces to more quickly contain and control wildfires, thereby improving initial attack success rates and reducing suppression costs, damage to communities, and firefighter exposure to injury.

The Preparedness program funds the up-front guaranteed annual availability costs of contracts that ensure the firefighting aircraft will be available and ready for use during the fire season. The benefiting program (typically Suppression) pays the actual flight use rate. For DOI, aviation resources include water scoopers (e.g. CL-215), jump ships, helicopters, single engine air tankers (SEATs), and air attack platforms ("eye in the sky" aerial supervision and direction). These resources are contracted by the Department, which assumes the responsibility for ensuring that each contract is filled with a performance-capable, safe aircraft at the lowest possible cost. Aircraft are positioned around the country based on analysis of anticipated and actual fire occurrence needs.

The aviation program is undergoing a significant change, with the transition from heavy air tankers to Type 1 helicopters and SEATs. This reconfigured fleet is expected to be successful in the initial attack stages of fire suppression, especially in lighter fuels common in DOI-managed lands. The use of these aerial resources should be sufficient to maintain an initial attack success rate of at least 95%.

As these resources are primarily contracted, strategic management of human capital for the wildland fire management program will not be adversely affected by the fleet transition.

This additional funding is required to operate a safe and efficient firefighting program. The number of aerial assets contracted and the length of season they will be available will be essentially the same as available in 2005. Supplemental aircraft will continue to be funded by suppression severity funds as needed.

#### **Firefighter Training - Ready Reserve (+1,874,000)**

An increase of \$1,874,000 is requested to establish a pilot program targeted to strengthen initial attack and develop the extended attack capabilities of Rural Fire Departments (RFD). *Containing Wildland Fire Costs: Utilizing Local Firefighting Resources, A Report by a Panel of the National Academy of Public Administrators*, stated that "one of the few opportunities to reduce suppression costs during a fire is to make better use of local firefighters". Developing a ready reserve of local firefighters can assist both Federal and State agencies with fire suppression cost containment and reduce losses to communities in the wildland urban interface.

For RFD firefighters to qualify for this training, the RFD will be required to have a reciprocal firefighting agreement in place with a DOI bureau. Over 3,800 RFDs already have such agreements in place with DOI.

This increase, if maintained in future years, will provide the baseline funding to fully develop that ready reserve force. The pilot program for 2006 will provide funds to repackage existing training and deliver training targeted to localities throughout the West. The program will provide training locally with the goal of developing a cadre of RFD personnel to provide a supplementary firefighter workforce with the necessary qualifications to fill Type 3 team positions in extended attack operations at the local level. Over the course of several years, groups of qualified firefighters can be formed into permanent Type 3 teams for initial and extended attack. As the reserves are developed and expanded, increased RFD wildland firefighters will contribute resources to quickly provide an initial attack response as well as provide a cadre of firefighters to be available for extended attack operations. Increased use of local resources will also reduce travel and associated wage costs of contract and Federal firefighters traveling to fires from distant areas, supporting fire suppression cost containment. Communities will benefit by having a cadre of skilled firefighters available to reduce the risk of property and resource loss from wildfire. Safety for both local populations and firefighters will be improved.



Creating a Ready Reserve of local, rural firefighters will ensure a cadre of skilled firefighters. DOI will expand collaboration with local Rural Fire Departments to ensure delivery of appropriate training modules.

Suitable training courses and means of delivery to meet the needs and employment patterns of RFD personnel will be developed in 2006. This is particularly true of the advanced courses necessary to qualify personnel for Type 3 teams. Current course material, training formats, and delivery methods are intended for Federal employees who can attend 40-hour courses. These courses need to be redesigned and broken into small segments that are logical, retain course content, meet with available time frames of volunteer firefighters, and can be delivered locally. A number of different cost-effective, innovative formats will be developed to provide RFDs flexibility in receiving the training that best suits the individual department. The estimated cost to repackage existing training is \$250,000.

Additional training courses that will provide an integrated approach to bridge both the structural and wildland sectors will have to be developed. Courses will be designed to capitalize on the leadership training available in the structural sector, augmented with technical training from the wildland environment. The courses will be developed during the first year of the ready reserve proposal, with the goal of offering these courses in subsequent years. DOI will work collaboratively with partners to develop these courses. These courses will serve RFD personnel seeking advanced training to become qualified to fill Type 3 team positions. The estimated cost to develop the additional training is \$250,000.

To support the success of the ready reserve proposal, the Department will expand collaboration with partners to develop and implement appropriate delivery means targeted to RFDs. Training will be delivered by partners, contractors, and DOI. The repackaged training will maximize reach to personnel who were previously unable to utilize existing DOI training. It is estimated that the ready reserve training program will begin offering courses for at least 1,300 personnel in 2006. Training will focus on fire behavior, suppression tactics, interagency operations, and will include modules on fire safety.



Developing a supplementary workforce will require not only targeted training but also proper personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure firefighter safety. Qualified firefighters will receive basic PPE to ensure their safety and reduce the likelihood of injury. While the training and PPE satisfy basic safety requirements, additional tools and communication equipment necessary for successful wildland fire suppression would be provided by the RFDs. Under the proposal, approximately \$585,000 will be used in FY 2006 to acquire basic PPE for the trainees.

Start-up costs in 2006 will be reallocated to training deployment in subsequent years. At full implementation, approximately 1,000 to 2,000 firefighters will be trained and equipped with PPE each year. This proposal will benefit both RFDs and Federal/State governments. RFDs will enhance long-term recruitment, supplement the aging volunteer roster, and reduce risk to the local community by having a resident, highly-trained wildland fire workforce. With greater initial attack capacity, fires may be contained at a smaller size, reducing loss of property and natural resources.

#### Ready Reserve Funding Plan

Activity	FY 2006	Subsequent Years (est.)
Training Repackaging	\$250,000	\$0
Training Development	250,000	0
Personal protective equipment (PPE)	585,000	810,000
Training Delivery	789,000	1,064,000
Totals	\$1,874,000	\$1,874,000

The following measures will be used to determine the Ready Reserve program annual accomplishments. Baseline data would be collected the first year so percentage increases could be measured, and progress toward the goal of expanding the RFD initial and extended attack capacity can be assessed. Preliminary estimates for the measures are included in the following table.

Measure	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Number of RFD personnel trained	1,300	1,800	1,800
Number of RFD personnel qualified and properly equipped (NWCG firefighter Type 2)	1,170	1,620	1,700
Number of RFD personnel that meet NWCG standards participating in initial and extended attack	200	300	400
Number of RFD personnel that meet NWCG standards participating in initial and extended attack as percent of the DOI Federal firefighter workforce*	5%	10%	15%

\* Percentages in FY 2007 and FY 2008 are estimated.

### Fire Preparedness Performance Summary

DOI Strategic Goal: Serve Communities							
End Outcome Goal: Protect lives, resources, and property							
Outcome Measures:	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Planned: Budget Just- ifications	2005 Planned: Revised Final	2006 Planned	Change in Perfor- mance (2005 : 2006)	2008 Long Term Target
Percent of unplanned and unwanted wildland fires contained during initial attack (SP: SIM.1.01.001)	97.5%	98%	95%	95%	95%	--	95%

## ACTIVITY: SUPPRESSION OPERATIONS

(\$000)

Bureau		2004 Actual	2005 Estimate	Uncontrol- lable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2006 Budget Request	Inc(+) / Dec(-) from 2005
<b>Fire Suppression A/</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>192,903</b>	<b>218,445</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>+15,722</b>	<b>234,167</b>	<b>+15,722</b>
	<i>FTE</i>	426	426			426	
Bureau Of Land Management	<b>\$</b>	99,942	TBD	0	TBD	TBD	TBD
	<i>FTE</i>	246	246			246	
Bureau Of Indian Affairs	<b>\$</b>	53,243	TBD	0	TBD	TBD	TBD
	<i>FTE</i>	21	21			21	
Fish And Wildlife Service	<b>\$</b>	7,444	TBD	0	TBD	TBD	TBD
	<i>FTE</i>	34	34			34	
National Park Service	<b>\$</b>	32,274	TBD	0	TBD	TBD	TBD
	<i>FTE</i>	125	125			125	
Emergency Supplemental, PL 108-287	<b>\$</b>	[+100,000]	[+98,611]	[0]	[-98,611]	[0]	

A/ The distribution of Suppression funds in 2005 and 2006 will depend upon analyses of the expected fire seasons and actual fire activity. FTE charged to the Suppression budget activity are for time charged by non-fire program employees while engaged in firefighting operations. Base-8 firefighter pay and FTE are budgeted and charged to the Fire Preparedness budget activity.

### ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

The Wildland Fire Management Suppression Operations budget activity funds the emergency and unpredictable aspects of the Department's wildland fire management program. Suppression operations include the total spectrum of management actions taken on wildland fires in a safe, cost-effective manner, considering public benefits and values to be protected and consistent with resource objectives and land management plans. Emergency actions taken during and immediately following a wildfire to stabilize the soil and structures to prevent erosion, floods, landslides, and further resource damage are included in this activity. Emergency stabilization actions may be performed within one year of containment of a fire, and monitored for up to three years after containment.

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The 2006 budget request for Suppression Operations is \$234,167,000. Excluding a contingency appropriation of \$98.6 million for suppression in 2005, this represents an increase of \$15,722,000 over the 2005 enacted appropriation. This activity supports the Serving Communities mission goal from the Department's draft Strategic Plan by providing protection of

lives, resources and property from wildland fire. Funding requests are guided by the historical 10-year average of suppression expenditures, adjusted for inflation. Suppression costs include the extraordinary costs (overtime, hazard pay, etc.) incurred by fire line, command, and support personnel; all wages for temporary emergency firefighter personnel; aircraft flight operations and ramp support; logistical services; supplies and equipment (including replacement of lost or damaged capital and expendable equipment); contracts for goods and services; administrative support directly associated with incidents; and immediate measures to stabilize soil damaged by fire suppression efforts.

Fire severity funding is used to improve initial attack response capabilities when extreme fire conditions occur. Extreme fire conditions arise when fire seasons start earlier than normal, last longer than normal, or exceed average high fire danger ratings for prolonged periods. These funds are typically used to temporarily increase firefighting staffing, pay for personnel and equipment, pre-position suppression forces in areas of abnormally high fire danger; conduct additional aerial reconnaissance; and acquire other supplemental contractual services. The use of funds for severity purposes is based on expected weather conditions, fuel conditions, and availability of resources, and is reviewed and approved at the national level of each agency.



In 2004, DOI successfully controlled more than 98% of wildfires during initial attack. Fires escaping initial attack are managed to reduce the loss of life, property, natural resources and taxpayer costs.

Emergency stabilization of severely burned areas, or those damaged by suppression actions, is carried out immediately after wildland fires to prevent resource damage and stabilize erodible soils or structures. These emergency activities are conducted in the period immediately following a fire and may extend, under certain circumstances, for up to one year after the fire is contained. Emergency stabilization activities control threats to life, property, and natural resources from the after effects of ground cover loss, such as mud flows, erosion of roads and stream beds, and siltation of streams and rivers from accelerated erosion. Longer-term rehabilitation will be funded under the Burned Area Rehabilitation budget activity.

In 2004, the Department successfully controlled more than 98% of unwanted wildland fires on DOI-managed lands during initial attack. The increase in initial attack success from 92% in the 2000 pre-National Fire Plan season to 97% or more every year from 2002 through 2004 demonstrates the effectiveness of increasing initial response capability achieved under the Plan. The Department and the Forest Service are now shifting more attention toward improving the effectiveness and cost efficiency of extended attack on large fires. A large fire cost containment and review process begun in 2003 is continuing. Large fire cost review teams are analyzing the cost efficiency of various aspects of fire suppression, including appropriate management response, aviation support, incident management, and contract support.

When the appropriate management response to a wildfire is initial attack, high per acre initial attack success avoids:

- Potentially higher aggregate suppression costs

- Significant resource damage
- Loss of economic benefits from tourism and resource-dependent industries
- Loss of community infrastructure (homes, roads, etc.)

The 10-year average annual cost for both DOI and Forest Service suppression operations continues to increase. Wildland firefighting costs are increasing due, in large part, to costs associated with suppression in areas of high hazardous fuel loads, and the increasing complexity of suppression in the wildland urban interface.

### 10-Year Wildfire History

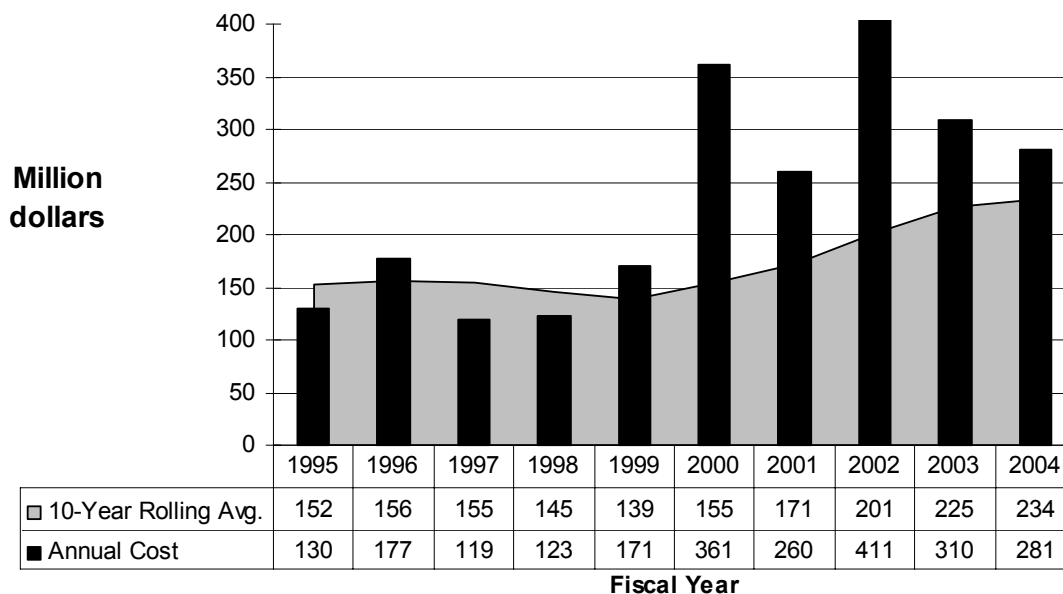
Calendar Year	Fires	Acres	Actual FY Cost *
1995	130,019	2,315,730	\$129,555
1996	115,025	6,701,390	\$177,222
1997	89,517	3,372,616	\$118,876
1998	81,043	2,329,709	\$123,221
1999	93,702	5,661,976	\$170,714
2000	122,827	8,422,237	\$361,218
2001	84,079	3,555,138	\$259,516
2002	88,458	6,937,584	\$410,527
2003	63,269	3,959,223	\$309,578
2004 #	65,878	8,094,531	\$281,244
<b>10-Year Average</b>	<b>93,382</b>	<b>5,135,013</b>	<b>\$234,167</b>

The figures in this table include all reported wildfires in the U.S.

\* Actual DOI suppression costs (thousands) are adjusted for inflation for comparability with FY2004.

# In FY 2004, 7,537 fires reported on DOI lands burned 3,327,739 acres.

### Annual and Average Suppression Costs



Costs prior to 2004 are adjusted for inflation.

**FIRE SUPPRESSION COST CONTAINMENT PROGRESS:**

- The Wildland Fire Leadership Council has received the “Large Fire Suppression Costs: Strategies for Cost Management” report that it commissioned in 2004. The report was written by a panel of senior State, local, Tribal and Federal representatives, and incident team members, with a mix of on-the-ground and policy expertise. The panel examined cost containment issues in a broad, land management-based scope to integrate suppression and vegetation management. The Council has assigned a group of senior Federal officials the responsibility of developing implementation plans for the feasible recommendations.
- Large Incident Strategic Decision and Assessment Oversight Reviews, begun in 2003, were continued in 2004 and will be conducted in 2005 and 2006. These reviews provide WFM leaders with detailed on-the-ground cost information that leads to more cost-efficient resource decisions.
- The WFLC adopted several near-term action items to address Large Incident Strategic Decision and Assessment Oversight Review findings that were accomplished in 2004, including:
  - Development and distribution of incident cost-share agreement guidelines so agreements are initiated prior to start of the fire season. A detailed sample of how to conduct cost share agreements was distributed by all the Federal fire management agencies before the 2004 fire season.
  - Resolution of problems with the Wildland Fire Situation Analysis process to improve timeliness and practicality for use on complex fires. A WFSA Help web page was created in March and is receiving thousands of hits per month. The WFSA software has been updated and training is being offered to all line officers. A group has been chartered to develop the next version of the WFSA program.
  - Correction of problems with the automated Resource Ordering and Status System identified in 2003, its first year of use.
  - Strengthening the oversight and financial management on incident command teams by adding incident business advisors and contract officer's representatives. Incident commanders may now assign incident management crews for more than 14 days under specified conditions. Incident business managers are now assigned to any fire with projected costs of \$5 million or more. Suppression incident cost objectives are now included as a performance measure in Incident Management Team evaluations.
  - The requirement for incident commanders to consider the least cost alternative when evaluating fire response strategies and tactics.
- In 2005 the following actions directed by the WFLC will be completed:
  - A thorough, objective study to provide findings and recommendations to strengthen the appropriate use of contract crews. The Pacific Northwest Geographic Area has undertaken a study on the use of contract resources.
  - An analysis of the use of aviation resources and the associated costs, and strategies to ensure that cost efficiency and effectiveness are considered when using aviation resources.
- DOI will continue to charge the base salaries of firefighters to the Preparedness budget activity as a cost containment method. A fixed budget for firefighter salaries requires managers to hire firefighters and support staff responsibly because there is no safety net provided in Section 102 for Preparedness funding.
- DOI will investigate the I-Suite system used by the Forest Service to determine if it can be used by DOI bureaus to report accurate fire costs more quickly and accurately.
- Wildland Fire Use will be available as an appropriate fire response strategy on more DOI lands as a result of fire management plan updates produced in 2004.

## 2004 Program Performance Accomplishments

For the second year in a row, and for the third time in the last four years, suppression spending was lower than in the preceding year. Overall, calendar year 2004 was a below average year for wildfire activity in the lower 48 states, however, Alaska experienced the most severe and long-lasting fire season in recorded history. Alaska accounted for 707 fires and 6.6 million acres burned. The lower 48 states experienced 65,171 fires burning nearly 1.5 million acres. Fewer dry lightning storms and high initial attack success rates contributed to the fire season being less severe than anticipated across the lower 48 states.

During fiscal year 2004 (October 1, 2003 – Sep. 30, 2004), interagency coordination and pre-positioning of preparedness resources resulted in a 98.3% initial attack success rate on fires on lands managed by the four DOI fire management bureaus. DOI-managed lands had 7,537 fires, of which only 123 escaped and became large fires. Nationwide, 75,076 reported fires burned over 8.5 million acres on all lands regardless of ownership.

The summer of 2004 in Alaska was the warmest and third driest on record and set the record for the most lightning strikes (9,022 strikes) in a 24 hour period on July 15. More Incident Management Teams (IMT) and hot shot crews from the lower 48 states were mobilized from the lower 48 states than in any previous season. Also for the first time ever, engines were shipped from the lower 48 states to Alaska. More water-scooping aircraft (CL-215s and 415s) and single engine airtankers (SEATS) were used than ever before in a single season. Additionally, there were more evacuations and threatened communities than ever before during a fire season in Alaska.

### The Largest Wildland Fires in 2004

Wildland fire	Start and end dates	Cause	Acres burned	Cost
<b>Alaska</b>				
Solstice Complex (BLM)	6/24 - 7/21	Lightning	119,500	\$11,500,000
Eagle Complex (BLM)	6/29 - 7/24	Lightning	614,974	\$3,700,000
Boundary (State)	6/13 - 9/02	Lightning	537,098	\$17,711,853
Central Complex (BLM)	7/13 - 9/03	Lightning	451,162	\$22,000,000
<b>Arizona</b>				
Willow (USFS)	6/24 - 7/21	Lightning	119,500	\$11,500,000
<b>California</b>				
Rumsey (State)	10/10 - 10/18	Human	39,138	\$10,282,654
<b>New Mexico</b>				
Peppin (USFS)	5/15 - 7/20	Lightning	64,488	\$8,000,000
<b>Utah</b>				
Hawkins (USFS)	7/28 - 8/10	Lightning	35,292	\$2,800,000
<b>Washington</b>				
Pot Peak/ SiSi Ridge Complex (USFS)	6/26 - 9/06	Lightning	47,170	\$42,490,000

Source: National Interagency Coordination Center

2004 figures current as of 10/22/04. The largest fires were determined by acreage.

Firefighting resources were also able to assist in the response and recovery efforts for the

hurricanes in the southeastern states. Fourteen of the Nation's 17 Type 1 IMTs, all four Area Command teams, and 12 national buying teams were assigned to the hurricane support over a two month period. In all, about 1,900 people from the wildland fire community assisted with hurricane recovery efforts this year. This hurricane response represents the broadest application of the Incident Command System to a natural disaster. The assignments from FEMA included base camp management, logistics, staging areas, and receiving and distribution centers.

Wildland Fire Use, the strategy for managing a wildfire, in places and under managed conditions specified in fire management plans to accomplish resource benefits, was used on 112 fires on DOI lands, covering 88,855 acres, in 2004.

FireCode, a new interagency IT system, was implemented Nation-wide in 2004. FireCode gives the fire management agencies the capability to rapidly and accurately report the total Federal cost for suppression of any large fire. For the first time, every agency responding to an incident uses the same cost code in their respective financial systems. FireCode was developed in response to Congressional direction for the National Fire Plan agencies to develop a method to standardize fire incident financial coding for fire suppression, especially the full costs of multi-jurisdictional fire suppression incidents.



## The Good Face of Fire

On a hot, windy July evening in 2003, a dry-lightning storm moved through northeastern Montana, igniting a string of fires that became known as the Missouri Breaks Complex.

A week later, more than 130,000 acres had burned, leaving behind a legacy of scorched ponderosa pine and blackened rangeland.

"Those fires ripped," says Phil Gill, then the fire management officer (FMO) for BLM's Miles City Field Office. "They got really active. They came after five years of drought. But it was still more than any of us expected."

A year later, though, Nature was showing a kinder and gentler hand on the land.

While burned trees still stand as a reminder of the



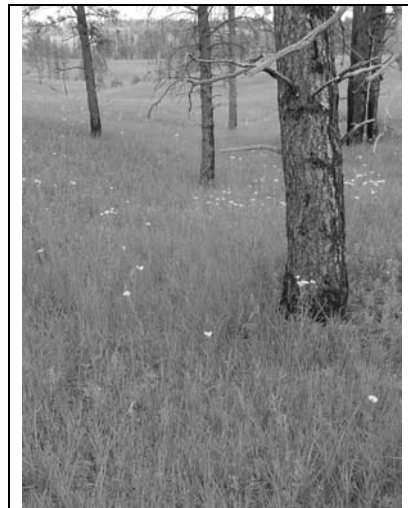
July 21, 2003, Fire works its way through a stand of Ponderosa Pine on the site of the Missouri Breaks Complex wildfire.



July 22, 2004 Regeneration. The same stand of timber, one year later.

powerful fires, the ground vegetation has come roaring back. With an assist from abundant moisture coming at just the right time, much of the area burned in the complex sprouted thick, lush vegetation well into the summer of 2004. Limited grazing was even authorized, something no one had predicted immediately after the fires struck.

In some respects, the benefits of the Missouri Breaks Complex resemble what could have been achieved if it were a wildland fire-use fire (WFO).



June 25, 2004, Grass and forbs carpet the once burned range near Squaw Creek, part of the Missouri Breaks Complex fire of 2003.

"In the long run, the fire was beneficial," says Gill, now the FMO for BLM's Montana/Dakota state office. "It increased forage and improved wildlife habitat. The fire returned much of the area to more of its natural state, and that's not a bad thing."

Gill cautions that because of the complex's size and intensity, plus the mixed ownership of the land, it could not have been managed as a WFO fire. Only in the right circumstances – slow-burning fires occurring in blocked ownership that pose minimal containment challenges – can a WFO achieve the twin goals of improving resources at a reduced cost.

But the Missouri Breaks Complex hints at what a WFO fire can accomplish in the right circumstances.

"Some positives came of it. Overall, the land may be healthier because of the fires," says Gill.

## **2005 PLANNED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE**

The annual pre-season forecast will be prepared during the month of February 2005. Preliminary indications are that the 2005 fire season may be less severe in the Southwest than in recent years because of heavy precipitation that should help alleviate the impact of the long-term drought. However, this may cause a higher than normal fire season in the lighter fuels typically managed by this Department if the summer is hot and dry. Large areas of the country, including the northern Rockies, continue to be at high risk of catastrophic wildfires. Alaska is unlikely to face a second consecutive year of record-breaking fire activity. Over 11 million of the most fuels-laden lands in the country have benefited from fuels reduction treatments in the past four years.

During 2005, the Forest Service and DOI will start work on a strategic plan for aviation support resources. The need for a comprehensive interagency strategic plan has been made apparent by the findings of recent reports, safety issues, and rising aviation costs. A blue ribbon panel in 2002 recommended actions that led to the cancellation of contracts for two models of airtankers, the development of inspection and maintenance criteria for large airtankers by the Sandia National Laboratory, and reduced use of airtankers beginning in 2003. An April 2004 report by the National Transportation Safety Board determined that there was currently no method to assure the airworthiness of large fixed-wing airtankers for wildland firefighting missions. This report led the Forest Service to remove 33 such airtankers from use in 2004. The costs for aviation support have risen dramatically in recent years, far outpacing any inflation index. DOI saw its annual contract costs rise from \$10.8 million in 2000 to nearly \$18 million in 2004; and these costs do not include the actual airtime mission costs which increased by \$5 million in 2004 to pay for replacement aircraft to fill the gap caused by the loss of the large airtankers.

The comprehensive strategic plan will be preceded by a bridging plan in 2005 that will deal specifically with issues arising out of the removal from wildland firefighting of large fixed-wing airtankers. Of the 33 tankers initially taken out of service in May 2004, some were subsequently approved for continued use, and others may be available under specific, limited conditions. The bridging plan will address those conditions and options for the use of alternative aircraft including military resources, helitankers, single-engine airtankers, and other airtanker models.

Wildland Fire Use will become a more commonly accepted management response to wildfires in 2005. Eighty-six percent of all DOI land management units have completed their updated fire management plans (FMP). Many of the FMPs describe places and conditions under which a land manager may allow WFU. Expanded WFU will result in fires on fewer acres being actively suppressed, with one of the results being reduced fire suppression costs. WFU is not without costs, however, because these fires are carefully monitored in case changing conditions point to the need for active suppression.

## JUSTIFICATION OF 2006 PROGRAM CHANGES

## 2006 PROGRAM CHANGES

	2006 Budget Request	Program Changes (+/-)
\$(000)	234,167	+ 15,722
FTE	426	+0

The 2006 budget request for Suppression Operations is \$234,167,000, a 7.1% increase over the 2005 requested level. This funding level will enable the Department to respond to an average level of wildland fire based on the actual costs of the most recent 10 years. Over the past ten years, from 1995 through 2004, an average of 93,000 fires has burned an annual average of 5.1 million acres.

## SUPPRESSION OPERATIONS PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

<b>DOI Strategic Goal: Serve Communities</b>							
<b>End Outcome Goal: Protect lives, resources, and property</b>							
End Outcome Measures	2003 Actual	FY 2004 Actual	FY 2005 President's Budget	FY 2005 Revised Plan	FY 2006 Plan	Change in Perfor- mance - 2005 Plan to 2006	Long-term Target (2008)
Number of homes and significant structures lost as a result of wildland fire are reduced (SP: SEM.1.005) <u>A/</u>	4,090	104	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
<b>Intermediate Outcome Goal 1: Improved fire management.</b>							
<b>Outcome Measures:</b>							
Number of acres burned by unplanned and unwanted wildland fires (SP: SIM.1.01.002) <u>B/</u>	3,959,223	CY: 8,094,531 FY: 8,516,202	4,797,962	5,135,013	5,135,013	0	5,135,013
<b>Primary Outputs funded by this subactivity:</b>							
Fire suppression (# of fires). <u>B/</u>	63,269	CY: 65,878 FY: 75,076	97,630	93,382	93,382	0	93,382

Notes:

A/ Among the major goals for Wildland Fire Management are to lose no homes to wildfire and to prevent damage to communities and the environment. Numerical expressions of those goals have not been developed.

B/ The numbers of fires and acres burned are national totals, not just those on Interior-managed lands because DOI firefighters participate in fire suppression actions on all lands, whether Federal, State, Tribal, or privately-owned.

**Gross fire suppression cost per acre is reported in the National Fire Plan section of the budget justification because both Departments incur expenses on large fires on all lands with wildland fires, regardless of ownership.**

**ACTIVITY: OTHER OPERATIONS**  
**SUBACTIVITY: HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION**

(\$000)

		2004 Actual	2005 Estimate	Uncontrol- lable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2006 Budget Request	Inc(+) / Dec(-) From 2005
<b>HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION</b>	\$	<b>183,896</b>	<b>201,409</b>	<b>+1,973</b>	<b>+7,838</b>	<b>211,220</b>	<b>+9,811</b>
	FTE	<b>1,452</b>	<b>1,467</b>			<b>1,467</b>	<b>0</b>
Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Fuels Reduction	\$	109,884	128,299	+974	+4,220	133,492	+5,194
	FTE	762	807			807	0
Non-WUI Hazardous Fuels Reduction	\$	74,012	73,110	+999	+3,618	77,727	+4,617
	FTE	690	660			660	0

**SUBACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**

The Hazardous Fuels Reduction budget subactivity encompasses wildland urban interface (WUI) and non-wildland urban interface hazardous fuels reduction treatments. An estimated 190 million acres of federally managed forests, woodlands, and grasslands in the lower 48 states are at increased risk of catastrophic wildland fires. To address this challenge, management and implementation of the hazardous fuels program has been structured to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness and to target resources to the highest-priority areas. Working with Federal, State, tribal, and local partners, fuels reduction projects are collaboratively identified and prioritized. The HFR budget includes planning, all operational aspects of fuels treatments, and project monitoring. The Department has its goal of contracting 50% of total fuels project spending. Available funding will be directed to these highest priority mitigation activities and treatments.

Hazardous fuels reduction in the WUI supports the Department's strategic goal of Serving Communities by supporting the end outcome of protecting lives, resources and property through the strategy of improving fire management. Hazardous fuels reduction treatments outside the WUI primarily support the Department's strategic plan goal to protect resources by maintaining or restoring proper functioning healthy ecosystems. All program goals and strategies are in accordance with the Secretary's direction, the Healthy Forests Initiative, the 10-year Comprehensive Strategy, and the Healthy Forests Restoration Act.

## HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION FUNDING BY BUREAU

(\$000)

Bureau		2004 Actual Obligations	2005 Estimate	Uncontrol- lable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2006 Budget Request*	Inc(+) Dec(-) From 2005*
<b>Hazardous Fuels Reduction</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>183,896</b>	<b>201,409</b>	<b>+1,973</b>	<b>+7,838</b>	<b>211,220</b>	<b>+9,811</b>
	<b>FTE</b>	<b>1,452</b>	<b>1,467</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>1,467</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>WUI Fuels Reduction</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>109,884</b>	<b>128,299</b>	<b>+974</b>	<b>+4,220</b>	<b>133,492</b>	<b>+5,194</b>
	<b>FTE</b>	<b>762</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>0</b>
Bureau of Land Management	<b>\$</b>	60,531	64,437	+539	TBD	TBD	TBD
	<b>FTE</b>	463	471				
Bureau of Indian Affairs	<b>\$</b>	21,816	27,299	+145	TBD	TBD	TBD
	<b>FTE</b>	95	97				
Fish and Wildlife Service	<b>\$</b>	11,121	15,583	+123	TBD	TBD	TBD
	<b>FTE</b>	73	104				
National Park Service	<b>\$</b>	13,492	15,320	+161	TBD	TBD	TBD
	<b>FTE</b>	129	132				
Office of the Secretary	<b>\$</b>	2,924	5,660	+6	-2,500		
	<b>FTE</b>	2	3			3	
<b>Non-WUI Fuels Reduction</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>74,012</b>	<b>73,110</b>	<b>+999</b>	<b>+3,618</b>	<b>77,727</b>	<b>+4,617</b>
	<b>FTE</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>0</b>
Bureau of Land Management	<b>\$</b>	30,949	26,949	+372	TBD	TBD	TBD
	<b>FTE</b>	286	286				
Bureau of Indian Affairs	<b>\$</b>	10,996	15,189	+100	TBD	TBD	TBD
	<b>FTE</b>	56	56				
Fish and Wildlife Service	<b>\$</b>	12,586	11,944	+212	TBD	TBD	TBD
	<b>FTE</b>	155	125				
National Park Service	<b>\$</b>	18,182	17,720	+315	TBD	TBD	TBD
	<b>FTE</b>	193	193				
Office of the Secretary	<b>\$</b>	1,329	1,308	0	0	0	0
	<b>FTE</b>	0	0		0	0	0

\* Hazardous fuels reduction projects for 2006 will be selected in May 2005 through a collaborative process with other Federal, State, Tribal, and local partners.

TBD = to be determined

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The 2006 budget request for the Hazardous Fuels Reduction program is \$211,220,000 and 1,467 FTE. This represents a net program increase of \$7.8 million over the 2005 enacted level. The program will continue to place priority on the protection of lives, resources, and property in the wildland urban interface (WUI). The amount for reducing fuels in the WUI is \$133,492,000 and 807 FTE. Non-WUI hazardous fuels reduction will use \$77,727,000 and 660 FTE. These resource levels will enable DOI bureaus to reduce fire risk on an estimated 479,000 WUI and 575,000 non-WUI acres in over 40 states for a total of 1,054,000 acres. The WUI hazardous fuels reduction program invests in projects that reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, mitigate hazards and restore fire-adapted ecosystems in high-risk wildland urban interface areas while the non-WUI program focuses on priority landscapes and projects that are designed to initiate or complete restoration of fire adapted ecosystems.

This budget subactivity supports the President's Healthy Forests Initiative, the Department's Resource Protection mission goal, Serving Communities mission goal and the strategy of improving fire management activities that restore and maintain proper functioning watersheds and landscapes in fire-adapted ecosystems. These are also key goals of the 10-Year Implementation Plan. It does so by improving forest and rangeland health; by reducing the threat wildfire poses to homes, businesses, infrastructure, and landscapes of community value; by lessening the risk of air and water pollution associated with unusually severe wild fire; and by reducing abnormally high mortality to plants, animals, insects, and microscopic organisms associated with fires in areas with excessive fuel loads.



Reducing hazardous fuels increases the success of stopping at wildfire during initial attack. Fuels treatments include piling thinned trees for burning during the wet winter months.

## FACTORS AFFECTING FUELS REDUCTION COSTS

- All projects, from the simplest small prescribed fire to the largest multi-jurisdictional multi-treatment project require collaborative planning, coordination, preparation, implementation, monitoring, reporting and program overhead.
- Direct on-the-ground treatment costs vary widely depending upon size, location, fuels, treatment type, and proximity to communities. Treatment costs can range from approximately \$5 per acre for large aerially-ignited prescribed burns of Florida sawgrass, to over \$10,000 per acre for labor-intensive mechanical treatments in forested WUI areas.
- Collaborative planning, assessments, and mitigation activities result in numerous homeowner education workshops, and volunteer mitigation projects in the WUI which are highly effective, however, the costs of these projects do not directly result in treated acres.

Since 2001, the initial year of the National Fire Plan, Interior has built an effective hazardous fuels reduction program to address key underlying causes of catastrophic wildfires. The

productivity of the fuels reduction program has improved significantly each year. In 2004, The Department reduced fuels on 1,261,000 acres. The program now has a professional workforce to conduct fuels reduction planning and treatments nationwide; local and other private contractors are being hired with greater than 50% of the on-the-ground treatment funding; the treatment selection process is carried out with State, local, and Tribal partners. The performance of the fuels program has improved dramatically over the last few years as Interior has improved the budgeting, project selection, and contracting processes.

The program continues to make improvements in efficiency and effectiveness by making increased use of common methods and systems across bureau and land management unit lines to accomplish its goals. For example, all DOI land managing agencies, along with the Forest Service, use the same web-based computer program (the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System or NFPORS) to track the planning for, and accomplishment of, fuels treatments. A common template for complying with NEPA environmental assessment requirements is now in place. A standard NEPA categorical exclusion for fuels treatments is likewise now in place. The Department has a biomass utilization strategy and working team to provide guidance and assistance in the development of markets and the efficient utilization of resulting biomass.

After nearly 100 years of fire suppression and past management activities, many forests, woodlands and rangelands are at risk of catastrophic wildfire. The American people, their property, and their environment are threatened by deteriorating forest and rangeland conditions. Federal forest and woodland conditions have declined due to increases in tree density, fuel buildup, changes in species composition, drought, epidemic insect infestation mortality, and the presence of exotic plants and diseases (e.g. Sudden Oak Death, Port Orford Cedar Disease, and blister rust in 5-needle pine species). Critical watersheds, threatened and endangered species habitat, commercial timber, and rangelands are increasingly at risk, threatening both public and firefighter safety and the ability of the land to support multiple resource uses and values significantly impacting local communities and businesses. Fuels reduction treatments are a useful tool in helping to reduce the impacts of forest insects and diseases on communities and the environment. The program encompasses all aspects of mitigating risks such as fuels inventories and assessment, collaborative planning and analysis, regulatory compliance, collaborative project prioritization and selection, site preparation, fuels removal, and monitoring and evaluation. As directed by Congress, projects are selected in concert with local, State, and Tribal partners.

The focus of the National Fire Plan and our hazardous fuels reduction program is on reducing the risk of damage from catastrophic wildfires to people and property. Acres treated and average cost per acre treated have been the key measurements used by the fire management agencies to validate their progress toward that goal. However, lower average cost per acre treated is not directly correlated with better cost effectiveness. Sometimes smaller, but more costly treatments can provide greater risk reduction. Strategic placement of fuels reduction treatment acres across a landscape is more important than the number of acres treated. The 2006 budget request reflects this emphasis. More and more information is being brought to bear to inform project selection and more systematic collaboration is occurring via the Community Wildfire Protection Planning process. As a result, fewer acres are being proposed in total for fuels reduction in 2006, however, we are persuaded that they will improve our efforts to reduce risk.

Fuels projects are funded according to policy and guidance provided by the President and Congress, Secretarial directives, the National Fire Plan, and interagency and intergovernmental agreements. Highest priority is given to those projects occurring in the wildland urban interface (WUI) and to non-WUI areas in fire regimes 1, 2 and 3 in condition classes 2 and 3. Potential productive use of biomass byproducts from mechanical treatments is considered during project planning.

### Methods Used to Prioritize Fuels Projects

Priorities for hazardous fuel projects in 2006 follow those used for the program that were encapsulated by parallel direction issued simultaneously by the Secretary of the Interior and the Chief of the Forest Service. These are:

- Funding is targeted on a priority basis to the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) and areas in condition classes 2 or 3 in fire regimes I, II, or III, consistent with Congressional appropriation direction, the President's Budget, Goals Two and Three of the *10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan*, and corresponding performance measures.
- WUI projects give priority to communities at greatest risk of fire and where communities are contributing community and private dollars, as well as volunteer efforts to reduce catastrophic fire risks. Treatments identified as part of a collaborative Community Wildfire Protection Plan receive high priority.
- Priority is given to mechanical treatments that produce by-products (small diameter trees, biomass, etc.) that can be utilized, consistent with Goal Four of the *10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan* and the corresponding performance measure
- Projects with overall risk reduction goals that result from partnerships and other collaborative efforts will receive preference. Efforts should continue toward obtaining economic use of the treated area by-products to help meet wood fiber and energy needs and to enhance community stability, Consistent with Goal Four of the *10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan*,

The Hazardous Fuels Reduction program supports the goals of the President's Healthy Forests Initiative and the recently enacted *Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003*, the purpose of which is,

*"To improve the capacity of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to plan and conduct hazardous fuels reduction projects on National Forest System lands and Bureau of Land Management lands aimed at protecting communities, watersheds, and certain other at-risk lands from catastrophic wildfire, to enhance efforts to protect watersheds and address threats to forest and rangeland health, including catastrophic wildfire, across the landscape, and for other purposes."*

The 2005 appropriation includes an increase of \$4 million to strengthen monitoring of fuels treatment projects. The ongoing results of this monitoring effort will increase the productivity and efficiency of the program as we gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of treatment types under various conditions and share that information across the program. The



implementation and utilization of guidelines and new authorities contained in the President's Healthy Forests Initiative and the Healthy Forests Restoration Act will also enhance the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the fuels program.

The Federal government cannot eliminate the risk wildfires pose to communities without major participation by partners around the country. In 2006, consistent with Secretarial direction, the hazardous fuels reduction program will continue to rely extensively on contracting. A 2004 Federal Register notice (*Woody Biomass Utilization, Interim Final Rule, 69 FR 52607-52609, August 27, 2004, 48 CFR 1437*) establishes consistent and efficient procedures to allow contractors the option to remove woody biomass by-products from Department of the Interior land management activities. This continued support helps build an infrastructure that is necessary to sustain progress in fuels reduction productivity, and also critical in deriving economic benefits that support the development and growth of biomass utilization industries. This option, where ecologically appropriate, will provide economic and social benefits by creating jobs and conserving natural resources. Strategies and efforts to utilize resulting biomass and stewardship contracting are designed to offset the cost of treatments and stimulate local economies. In 2004, greater than 50 percent of fuels treatment funding was invested with contractors. Also in 2004, 22 Stewardship Contracts were issued. Use of Stewardship Contracts is expected to more than double in 2005 with 70 planned. Removal or use of woody biomass will reduce smoke and emissions from prescribed and natural fires; preserve landfill capacities; reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfires to communities and public/private utilities; improve watershed and wildlife habitat protection; and improve forest, woodland, and rangeland health.

To improve the prioritization and selection process of projects, the program is investing in the LANDFIRE vegetative mapping and imaging technology. LANDFIRE will assist program managers in being able to better identify areas at risk to help managers more precisely target fuels reduction projects to maximize their benefits at both the national and local level. The LANDFIRE project was initiated in 2002 to develop a comprehensive package of data layers, models, and tools in support of analyses for planning of fuels treatments at national, regional, and local scales. LANDFIRE is an interdepartmental, satellite generated, field verified, fuels imaging, mid-scale map with multiple spatial data layers that will characterize fuel conditions, vegetation types, define fire regimes and condition classes, and define fire potential for wildland fire management applications. LANDFIRE is being developed to help implement the National Fire Plan. LANDFIRE products will assist all wildland fire management bureaus and their partners in analyzing fuel treatment projects that will support managers in focusing fire treatments on higher risk areas. This information will aid managers in evaluating fire hazards, prioritize hazardous fuels reduction treatments both in wildlands and the wildland/urban interface, and for comprehensive planning analysis within the Fire Program Analysis System. LANDFIRE will help set forest and rangeland health objectives at the watershed level and improve the effectiveness in applying and monitoring cross-boundary fuels treatment projects. This project is a partnership between the USDA Forest Service Missoula Fire Sciences Lab, the USGS EROS Data Center, and The Nature Conservancy's Fire Learning Network, with funding provided by the Forest Service and the Department of Interior.

The Department is working with the Forest Service, Tribes, states, local governments, and stakeholders to form nationwide partnerships to restore America's forests, woodlands, and rangelands to fire-adapted conditions. Forests and rangelands with reduced risks from fire and infestation will improve the environment and provide economic and aesthetic benefits to communities throughout the country, as well as support a variety of resource uses. Lands in

need of fuels reduction remain at risk of severe, unplanned and unwanted wildfire every year. Conditions resulting from dead vegetation, overgrowth, ladder fuels, heat, and drought are such that fire on these lands may result in excessive adverse impacts to people and the environment. Reducing fuel loads protects people, communities, and the environment from the ravages of unusually severe wildfires.

### 2004 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

	2004 Plan	2004 Actual	2004 Plan versus Actual
Acres treated in the WUI, total	331,798	490,110	+158,312
Acres treated outside the WUI, total	723,556	770,797	+47,241
Total acres treated	1,055,354	1,260,907	+205,553
Average gross cost per acre in the WUI	$\frac{\$109.884\text{m}}{331,798} = \$331$	$\frac{\$115.375\text{m}}{490,110} = \$235$	-\$96 per acre
Average gross cost per acre outside the WUI	$\frac{\$74.012\text{m}}{723,556} = \$102$	$\frac{\$80.075\text{m}}{770,797} = \$104$	+\$2 per acre
Average gross cost per acre in total	$\frac{\$183.896\text{m}}{1,055,354} = \$174$	$\frac{\$195.450\text{m}}{1,260,907} = \$155$	-\$19 per acre

Program performance in 2004 exceeded all targets for treating WUI and non-WUI acres. The DOI bureaus had the most successful year since the beginning of the National Fire Plan in reducing the threats to communities from wildfires. The bureaus collectively removed excess hazardous fuels on 490,110 high priority acres in the WUI, 158,312 acres above the 331,798 acre WUI target. Treatments outside the WUI reached 770,797 acres compared to the 723,556 acre target. Overall, the agencies applied treatments to 1,260,907 acres compared to the 1,055,354 acre target.

Three factors contributed to the increase in treated acres relative to the 2004 plan. One was the obligation of a significant amount of money in FY 2003 to contracts at the end of the year that resulted in treatments being completed in FY 2004. The second was the favorable weather conditions that resulted in a significant increase in prescribed fire acres to treat high priority projects. Of equal importance was the presence of a collaborative hazardous fuels reduction management and implementation infrastructure that included pre-identified projects, contracting capability, properly trained Federal and private sector personnel, tracking systems, and other components that permitted the agencies to effectively manage the available funds.

Non-National Fire Plan programs undertook forest and rangeland health activities that removed hazardous fuels from another 370,000 acres in 2004. These activities, performed under the auspices of the President's Healthy Forests Initiative, supported wildlife habitat improvements,

watershed enhancements and vegetation management and also restored forest and rangeland health.

Other major hazardous fuels reduction accomplishments included:

- Exceeded goal of contracting 50% of total fuels project spending with a total of 61.8% of project funding going to the private sector.
- Began development of DOI/USFS Manuals and Handbooks to provide consistent standards and direction to all agencies.
- Completed guidance and began implementation of the effective use of the Presidents Healthy Forest Initiative, and the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003.
- Developed the DOI strategy to improve the utilization of biomass resulting from fuels treatments.
- Awarded 22 stewardship contracts. In addition, stewardship projects will produce, as a by-product, 14 million board feet (MMBF) of saw timber, 1.2 MMBF of other wood products, and over 26,000 tons of biomass (chips) for energy production.
- Issued a Federal Register Notice adding two new provisions to the Department's acquisition regulations specifying a contract clause to allow service contractors to remove woody biomass generated as a result of land management service contracts wherever ecologically appropriate and in accordance with the law.
- Convened a national meeting, the Bioenergy and Wood Products Conference, in Denver with industry, community and environmental organizations to meet with senior Administration officials and discuss opportunities to expand the use of woody biomass by-products of hazardous fuel reduction and forest restoration treatments.

## **2005 PLANNED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE**

The 2005 program planned performance continues Interior's increasing emphasis on protection of people and communities through expansion of treatments in the WUI, which will double compared with 2001. The 2005 program will continue to emphasize the use of contractors, with contracts scheduled to account for at least 50 percent of on-the-ground treatment costs. The 2005 program will also emphasize the effective use of resulting biomass to help offset the cost of fuels treatments and stimulate local rural economies.

Planned treatment acres in 2005 are not expected to reach the actual acres accomplished in 2004. This is due to the carryover funds in 2003 obligated to contracts that were accomplished in 2004 and favorable weather conditions that allowed the bureaus to complete a significant number of prescribed fire acres. The Department will treat more acres in the WUI in 2005 than originally planned. Fuels reduction in the WUI will exceed the goal of 377,000 by approximately 44,000 acres. The implementation of the DOI biomass utilization strategy, the President's Healthy Forests Initiative, and Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 will greatly assist the Bureaus in mitigating risks to communities.

The revised plan for 2005 reflects the actual projects that were selected through the collaborative process for accomplishment. The original plan was a preliminary estimate from the previous December. The 2005 revised plan shows an increase in WUI acres planned to be treated with the emphasis on communities that have completed Community Wildfire Protection Plans.

In 2005, the program is taking a major step toward further improving the effectiveness of fuels reduction. The program is in the process of developing DOI and USFS Manuals and Handbooks that will guide planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting standards that will be used by all of the WFM bureaus beginning in 2005. Until now, each bureau had provided guidance with differing levels of completeness. Common guidance, standards and protocol will increase efficiency and effectiveness. Monitoring the effectiveness of the fuels treatment program is one of the four prime goals of the "10-Year Comprehensive Strategy" and its "Implementation Plan," plans embraced by the President's Healthy Forests Initiative and by Congress in the *Healthy Forests Restoration Act*.

	<b>2004 Actual</b>	<b>2005 Original Plan</b>	<b>2005 Revised Plan</b>	<b>2005 Plan versus 2004 Actual</b>
Acres treated in the WUI, total	490,110	377,000	421,000	-69,110
Acres treated outside the WUI, total	770,797	723,556	647,000	-123,797
Total acres treated	1,260,907	1,100,556	1,068,000	-192,907
Average gross cost per acre in the WUI	$\frac{\$115.375\text{M}}{490,110} = \$235$	$\frac{\$135.116\text{M}}{377,000} = \$358$	$\frac{\$128.299\text{M}}{421,000} = \$305$	+\$70
Average gross cost per acre outside the WUI	$\frac{\$80.075\text{M}}{770,797} = \$104$	$\frac{\$74.166\text{M}}{723,556} = \$103$	$\frac{\$73.110\text{M}}{647,000} = \$113$	+\$9
Average gross cost per acre in total	$\frac{\$195.450\text{M}}{1,260,907} = \$155$	$\frac{\$209.282\text{M}}{1,100,556} = \$190$	$\frac{\$201.409\text{M}}{1,068,000} = \$189$	+\$34

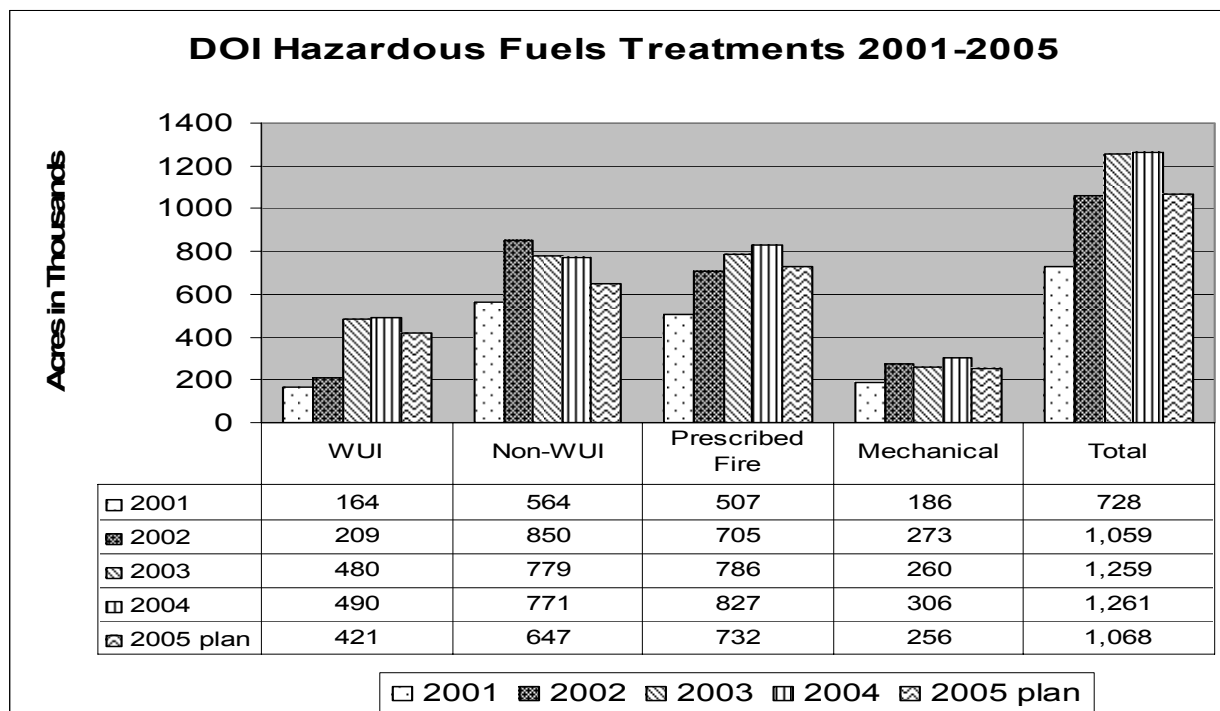
Under the guidance of the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, an interagency monitoring framework is being developed that will permit evaluation of the success of fuels treatments in meeting hazard mitigation and natural resource management objectives, both locally and across landscapes. Long term monitoring of the success of treatments in achieving goals and objectives will be essential to validate or adjust the preparedness, hazardous fuels and vegetative change models being developed in the interagency Fire Program Analysis system. Monitoring also is required to validate the effectiveness of stewardship contracts in reducing hazardous fuels conditions. Another major effort currently underway is the design of a standard curriculum for training fuels management specialists.

In 2005, the Department will initiate implementation of the Interagency Fire Management Program Qualifications Standards and Guide that was completed in 2004. The 2005 program will continue current efforts to provide enhanced training and career advancement opportunities through the training academies and targeted programs such as the Wildland Fire Apprenticeship Program and the Technical Fire Management Program.

The 2005 appropriation includes funding for implementing a curriculum for professional fuels management specialists. Today, effective fuels management specialists need to possess skills and knowledge beyond the ability to manage the removal of fuels by prescribed fire, mechanical, or other means. Fuels management specialists also need to understand and be able to apply NEPA and ESA regulations; communicate and negotiate effectively with many diverse interests; and, develop treatment plans that achieve resource goals in collaboration with the affected communities and other partners. Advanced training courses that support the President's Healthy Forests Initiative will be conducted at the Prescribed Fire Training Center in Tallahassee, Florida and the Fire Use Training Academy in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In addition to those two centers, intermediate level courses are taught at these other venues:

Northern Rockies Training Center, Missoula, Montana  
 Great Basin Training Center, Boise, Idaho  
 Pacific NW Training Center, Redmond, Washington  
 McClellan Training Center, Sacramento, California  
 Other Locations (including states and The Nature Conservancy)

The Department of the Interior will complete a Strategic Plan for biomass utilization in 2005, and will work with our partners and sister agencies in a national strategy. The Department of Energy, Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture are leading the effort to form a Federal Woody Biomass Utilization Working Group to promote and support the utilization of woody biomass and woody biomass products and residues from forest and woodland treatments. A charter is being considered to formalize this technical working group.



### Fort Apache Agency – Hondah Fuel Break

Hondah Fuel Break, located on the White Mountain Indian Reservation in East-Central Arizona, is a 10,500-acre project that started about 20 years ago but flourished with National Fire Plan funding in 2001. Under the National Fire Plan, 8,500 acres have been completed which include mechanical treatments (thinning and brush hog) and pile burning. Several biomass utilization processes were used. Timber was harvested and processed at the tribal sawmill, fuel

wood was harvested through The a bureau permit system, and small diameter material was collected and processed by a local pellet plant and a pallet plant located in Phoenix. The project is adjacent to, and protects about 20,000



property owners living in the communities of Pinetop, Hondah, and McNary, Arizona. Each of these communities was threatened by the Rodeo-Chediski Fire in 2002.

The White Mountain Apache Tribe and Bureau of Indian Affairs, Fort Apache Agency are cooperators in the project. Fuels treatments were completed by tribal 638 contracts and crews working at the agency. The surrounding communities continue to actively support the project. Due to project size and complexity, some type of fuel

treatment will be scheduled indefinitely as maintenance treatments are required for years to come.

## JUSTIFICATION OF 2006 PROGRAM CHANGES

### 2006 PROGRAM CHANGES

		2006 Budget Request	Program Changes (+/-)
<b>Hazardous Fuels Reduction</b>	<b>\$(000)</b>	<b>211,220</b>	<b>+7,838</b>
	<b>FTE</b>	<b>1,467</b>	<b>0</b>
WUI Fuels Reduction	\$(000)	133,492	+4,220
	FTE	807	0
Non-WUI Fuels Reduction	\$(000)	77,727	+3,618
	FTE	660	0
LANDFIRE	\$(000)	[3,100]	[-2,500]
	FTE	0	0

The FY 2006 budget request for Hazardous Fuels Reduction is \$211,220,000 and 1,467 FTE, a net program increase of \$7,838,000 and 0 FTE from the 2005 estimated level. The increase will be focused on expanding and improving the program to meet the identified highest priority treatments to protect communities and the environment. With the completion of risk assessments, mitigation plans, Community Wildland Fire Protection Plans and interagency Fire Management Plans, the bureaus and collaborative partners are able to identify an annual program that prioritizes mitigation activities that will make the greatest impact in reducing risks and restoring priority landscapes. Priority acres will be treated but at an increased cost. This means that the final project list will increasingly include projects identified in CWPPs which may include higher cost acres, resulting in fewer acres treated per million dollar investment. The Department will continue to emphasize involvement of the local communities through contracting, stewardship and biomass utilization.

	2005 Plan	2006 Plan	2006 Plan versus 2005 Plan
Acres treated in the WUI, total	421,000	479,000	+58,000
Average gross cost per acre in the WUI	$\frac{\$128,299\text{M}}{421,000}$ = \$304	$\frac{\$133,492\text{M}}{479,000}$ = \$279	-\$25
Acres treated outside the WUI, total	647,000	575,000	-72,000

Average gross cost per acre outside the WUI	$\frac{\$73.110\text{M}}{647,000} = \$113$	$\frac{\$77.73\text{M}}{575,000} = \$135$	+\$22
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The FY 2006 DOI President's budget request reflects the established fuels treatment prioritization and selection process that involves the local, state, Tribal, and Federal agencies in a collaborative effort to mitigate risks to communities and the environment. This very effective process will result in fluctuation of total annual acres treated but will ensure that the funding goes to the highest priority areas to reduce the imminent threats to the highest values and promote local cooperation, coordination and collaboration.

#### WUI Hazardous Fuels Reduction Treatments (+\$6,720,000)

The danger of uncontrolled and unwanted wildfires continues to increase as a result of insects, disease, and fuel loads. The President and the Secretary have made the removal of hazardous fuels from our forests, woodlands, shrublands, and grasslands a high priority initiative for the Administration and Department, especially in WUI areas.

A program increase of \$6,720,000, 5.3% above the 2005 enacted level, will be used to remove excess hazardous fuels from an additional 58,000 acres in the WUI. This increase in acres over the FY 2005 target and continues DOI's commitment to placing the highest priority on protecting people and communities from severe wildland fire. The increase will also support participation in the development of risk assessments and mitigation plans (Community Wildfire Protection Plans) which will prioritize mitigation activities for the highest risk communities.

#### Non-WUI Hazardous Fuels Reduction Treatments (+\$3,618,000)

Funding for hazardous fuels reduction projects outside the WUI will increase by \$3.6 million, 4.9% above the 2005 enacted level. The increase will be used to offset the higher costs associated with restoring landscapes that have been identified as at high risk through the collaborative process. The non-WUI program concentrates on priority landscapes designed to initiate or complete rehabilitation of fire-adapted ecosystems.

The additional treatments in 2006 will enable the Department to:

- remove brush or highly flammable grasses and forbs along roads, trails and recreational travel corridors to reduce risks of human caused fires
- remove downed logs, snags and small trees and brush in shaded fuel breaks
- establish defensible fuel profile zones, and community defense zones; and
- protect community municipal watersheds, infrastructures, social, historical and cultural sites
- stimulate local rural economies through offering biomass for economic markets, and stewardship contracting opportunities.

#### LANDFIRE Project (-\$2,500,000)

Funding for the LANDFIRE project will decrease by \$2.5 million. This decrease offsets the one-time increase in funding in 2005 which was used to pay for the accelerated development schedule of the Rapid Assessment. This reduction will not affect the LANDFIRE development schedule.



## Wildland Urban Interface Hazardous Fuels Reduction Performance Summary

<b>DOI Strategic Goal: Serve Communities</b>							
<b>End Outcome Goal: Protect lives, resources, and property</b>							
<b>Intermediate Outcome Goal: Improve fire management.</b>							
<b>Outcome Measures:</b>	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Planned: Budget Just- ifications	2005 Planned: Revised Final	2006 Planned	Change in Performance (2005 : 2006)	2009 Long Term Target
Number of acres treated that are in the wildland-urban interface and are identified as high priority through collaboration consistent with the 10-Year Implementation Plan (SP: SIM.1.01.003)	480,110	490,110	377,000	421,000	479,000	+58,000 (+13.7%)	500,000
Number of acres treated in the wildland-urban interface per million dollars gross investment (SIM.1.01.004)	<u>480,110</u> \$154.0M = 3,117	<u>490,110</u> \$115.4M = 4,247	<u>377,000</u> \$135.1M = 2,790	<u>421,000</u> \$128.3M = 3,281	<u>479,000</u> \$133.5M = 3,588	+307	<u>500,000</u> \$135M = 3,703
<b>Primary Outputs funded by this subactivity:</b>							
Fuels reduction treatments by prescribed/natural fire implemented within the WUI. (acres)	218,573	250,083	142,000	215,743	292,236	+76,493	TBD
Fuels reduction treatments by mechanical means implemented within the WUI. (acres)	158,090	224,239	186,000	159,224	144,900	-14,324	TBD
Fuels reduction treatments by other means implemented within the WUI. (acres)	103,447	15,788	49,000	46,033	41,567	-4,466	TBD
Percent of prescribed fires conducted consistent with all Federal, State, Tribal, and local smoke management requirements (NK)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0	100%

Increase in prescribed fire acres treated is related to the follow-up treatments to mechanical treatments and maintaining existing treatments.

## Hazardous Fuel Reduction Non-WUI Performance Summary

<b>DOI Strategic Goal: Resource Protection</b>							
<b>End Outcome Goal: Improve the health of watersheds, landscapes, and marine resources that are DOI managed or influenced in a manner consistent with obligations regarding the allotment and use of water.</b>							
<b>Intermediate Outcome Goal 1: Restore and maintain proper function to watersheds and landscapes.</b>							
<b>Intermediate Outcome Measures:</b>	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Planned: Budget Justificati ons	2005 Planned: Revised Final	2006 Planned	Change in Performa nce (2005 : 2006)	2009 Long Term Target
Number of acres in fire regimes 1, 2, or 3 moved to a better condition class (SP: PIM.1.01.004)	279,188	294,000	285,000	259,000	230,000	-29,000	250,000
Number of acres in fire regimes 1, 2, or 3 moved to a better condition class – as a percent of total acres treated (PIM.1.005)	<u>279,188</u> 778,727 = 36%	<u>294,000</u> 771,000 = 38%	<u>285,000</u> 723,000 = 39%	<u>259,000</u> 647,000 = 40%	<u>230,000</u> 575,000 = 40%	0%	<u>250,000</u> 500,000 = 50%

## Hazardous Fuel Reduction Non-WUI Performance Summary

<b>DOI Strategic Goal: Resource Protection</b>							
<b>End Outcome Goal: Improve the health of watersheds, landscapes, and marine resources that are DOI managed or influenced in a manner consistent with obligations regarding the allotment and use of water.</b>							
<b>Intermediate Outcome Goal 1: Restore and maintain proper function to watersheds and landscapes.</b>							
<b>Intermediate Outcome Measures:</b>	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Planned: Budget Justificati ons	2005 Planned: Revised Final	2006 Planned	Change in Performa nce (2005 : 2006)	2009 Long Term Target
Number of acres in fire regimes 1, 2, or 3 moved to a better condition class per million dollars of gross investment (SP: PIM.1.01.006)	<u>279,188</u> \$86.64M = 3,222	<u>294,000</u> \$80.08M =3,671	<u>285,000</u> \$74.17M = 3,843	<u>259,000</u> \$73.11 =3,543	<u>230,000</u> \$77.73M = 2,959	-584	<u>250,000</u> \$75M = 3,333
Number of acres treated that are in condition classes 2 or 3 in fire regimes 1 through 3 outside of wildland-urban interface in total (PIM.1.01.008)	468,288	494,000	440,000	420,000	373,000	-47,000	500,000
Number of acres treated that are in condition classes 2 or 3 in fire regimes 1 through 3 outside of wildland-urban interface as a percent of all acres treated (PIM.1.01.009)	<u>468,288</u> 778,727 = 60%	<u>494,000</u> 771,000 = 64%	<u>440,000</u> 723,000 = 61%	<u>420,000</u> 647,000 = 65%	<u>373,000</u> 575,000 = 65%	0%	<u>300,000</u> 500,000 = 67%
Number of acres treated outside the wildland-urban interface per million dollars gross investment (SP: PIM.1.01.010)	<u>778,727</u> \$86.64M = 8,988	<u>771,000</u> \$80.08M = 9,628	<u>723,000</u> \$74.17M = 9,748	<u>647,000</u> \$73.11 =8,850	<u>575,000</u> \$77.73M =7,397	-1,453	<u>500,000</u> \$75M =6,666
Percent of prescribed fires conducted consistent with all Federal, State, Tribal, and local smoke management requirements (NK)	100%	100%	NA	100%	100%	0	100%
<b>Primary outputs funded by this subactivity:</b>							
Fuel management treatments by prescribed/natural fire implemented outside the WUI. (acres)	567,152	576,940	561,000	506,911	451,930	-54,981	TBD
Fuel management treatments by mechanical means implemented outside the WUI. (acres)	102,456	148,522	115,000	104,781	99,424	-5,357	TBD
Fuel management treatments by other means implemented outside the WUI. (acres)	109,119	45,335	47,464	35,308	24,278	-11,030	TBD

### ***Fire Break Protects Utah Community***

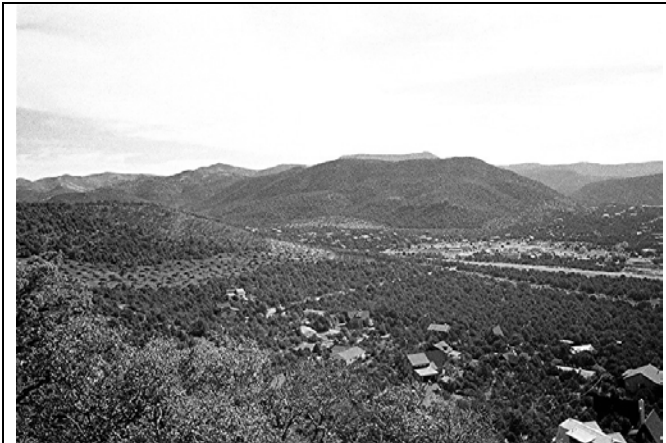


Fuel breaks surrounding Central- fire entered the treated area and dropped to the ground.

On August 12, 2004, lightning ignited the Cal Hollow Fire in pinyon and juniper northwest of the small Utah town of Central. The Central Volunteer Fire Department was the first to reach the fire. The **National Fire Plan RFA program** (DOI) and VFA program (USDA) helped prepare the volunteers for the fire by providing the equipment and training they needed.

The town of Central is one of the top ten “communities at risk” for wildfire in Utah. To help protect the community, a fire break project was planned and completed under the Healthy Forests Initiative streamlined analysis process, with no appeals. The Forest Service started work on the fuels reduction project last fall. Homeowners removed brush and lopped trees around their homes.

When wind drove the Cal Hollow Fire straight for the town, more than 100 homes were evacuated. The fuel break slowed the raging fire, allowing defensive actions for the homes. No structures were lost, and residents returned to their homes that night.



The community of Central saved by its fuel break.

## ACTIVITY: OTHER OPERATIONS

### SUBACTIVITY: BURNED AREA REHABILITATION

#### SUBACTIVITY SUMMARY (\$000)

Subactivity		2004 Actual Amount	2005 Estimate Amount	Uncontrollable & Related Changes (+/-) Amount	Program Changes (+/-) Amount	2006 Budget Request Amount	Inc(+) / Dec(-) from 2005 Amount
Burned Area Rehabilitation	\$	24,198	23,939	+200	+337	24,476	+537
	FTE	44	44	0	0	44	0

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The 2006 budget request for the Burned Area Rehabilitation program is \$24,476,000 and 44 FTE. These funds and FTE are shared on a priority basis between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), National Park Service (NPS), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

This program supports the Resource Protection goal from the Department's Strategic Plan by restoring and maintaining proper function to watersheds and landscapes by such actions as reseeding with native plants to stabilize soils, invasive species control and management, and restoring wildlife habitat. Burned Area Rehabilitation is listed as a performance measure under Goal Three – Restore Fire-Adapted Ecosystems in the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy/Implementation Plan. Rehabilitation of burned areas also helps the Wildland Fire Management program goal of Serving Communities by protecting them from damaging floods and mudslides.

Rehabilitation treatments funded by this program may supplement emergency stabilization measures and continue up to three years from containment of the fire. After three years, the bureau resource management programs assume responsibility for further landscape restoration in accordance with their respective land use plans and mission goals. Costs for emergency stabilization (emergency actions taken immediately after and through the first 12 months following the fire to minimize threats to life or property) are charged to the suppression operations budget account.

The rehabilitation program initiates longer-term actions to repair or improve lands unlikely to recover naturally from severe wildland fire damage. The goal is to initiate the restoration of ecosystem structure, function, diversity, and dynamics according to resource management objectives defined in approved land management plans. Typical treatments include seeding of native or other desirable vegetation, tree planting, invasive species treatments, erosion control structures, mulching, and the maintenance of burned fences or signs.

The BLM will designate \$4,600,000 of its allocation to the Native Plant Materials Development project. The primary focus of the Native Plant long-term project is to increase the diversity and amount of native seed available for stabilization, rehabilitation, and restoration efforts on public lands. This is in direct response to Congressional direction to establish a long term program to “supply native plant material for short-term emergency stabilization and longer term rehabilitation and restoration efforts.” The increasing use of native plant materials ensures sound rehabilitation and protection of diverse habitats, while providing for environmentally responsible recreation and commercial uses. The Native Plant Materials Program supports the Department’s Draft Strategic Plan by improving the health of watersheds and sustaining biological communities. This program strives to provide plant material to restore and maintain proper functioning conditions in BLM-managed riparian, wetland, and upland after fire. The Native Plant Materials Program is helping to increase the economic self sufficiency of communities by providing business opportunities to western communities while implementing the competitive sourcing initiative.

In April, 2003, the Government Accountability Office made note that the U.S. Forest Service and Department of the Interior (predominately BLM managed lands) rehabilitation program was unable to consistently validate the effectiveness of stabilization and rehabilitation treatments. In their report, *Wildland Fires, Better Information Needed on Effectiveness of Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Treatments*, GAO recommended two specific items:

*“To ensure effective emergency stabilization and rehabilitation treatments, GAO recommends Interior and USDA (1) specify procedures to be used to monitor treatment effectiveness, including type and extent of monitoring data collected and methods to collect these data, and (2) develop an interagency system to collect, store, and disseminate information on monitoring results.”*

The Department, under the guidance of the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, is working with the Forest Service to address the issues and concerns raised by GAO.

#### **Use of Cost and Performance Information in the Burned Area Rehabilitation Program**

As part of an annual review of the program, BLM analysis of ABC data in 2004 drew attention to differences in contracting costs within and between States and regions.

Cost per unit data was compared between treatments with similar goals and objectives. When combined with effectiveness monitoring results, initial cost per unit effectiveness information was teased out of the results. Another year of data is needed before strong policy direction can be uniformly issued across the bureaus.

Program variability is high between States, bureaus and regions. This is partly due to treatment selection, geography, topography, plant community types, presence of invasive plants, and experience/knowledge of persons involved. This can be influenced through additional training and via informational data sharing.

## 2004 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A new Departmental Manual (620 DM 3) was signed and implemented in 2004. This new manual clearly separated emergency stabilization activities from burned area rehabilitation activities. Although many treatments for each activity are essentially the same, treatment approval and funding processes were clarified.

In 2004, the Department of the Interior tracked over 430 plans resulting in 2.8 million units of accomplishment. These accomplishments included:

Rehabilitation:

- 180,709 acres rehabilitated
- 265 acres additional vegetation treatments
- 60,278 acres of additional assessments

Invasive species (weeds):

- 1,362,888 acres inventoried
- 16,775 acres treated
- 110,761 acres evaluated

Structures/Facilities:

- 178 miles of road repair
- 441 projects constructed
- 452 projects maintained

Treatment Effectiveness Monitoring:

- 1,059,385 acres

Native Plant Materials Development accomplishments:

California

At Fort Ord, CA, BLM is working with California State University Monterey Bay, the Garden Club of America, the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society, Monterey County, and many others using over 1,000 volunteers to collect native seed and assist in growing native plants.

Idaho, Utah and Nevada (The Great Basin)

The Great Basin Native Plant Selection and Increase Project established commercial seed production fields with qualified seed growers in order to increase native forb availability for use in rehabilitation and restoration of Great Basin rangelands. Great Basin plant materials including *Maple Grove* Lewis flax, *Anatone* bluebunch wheatgrass, *Snake River Plains* four-wing saltbush and *Northern Cold Desert* winterfat were released for commercial production. The Aberdeen Native Plant Materials Center developed procedures for production of rooted cuttings of four wing saltbush and established a demonstration garden near Boise, ID. Transplanted plots of Toe Jam Creek and Fish Creek bottlebrush squirreltails and Cucharas green needlegrass established in 2003 are nearly ready for seed harvest.

Oregon (The Columbia Plateau)

2004 was the third year that Vale District is implemented a native seed strategy. The Vale District has developed partnerships with private industry and the Forest Service Nursery at Lucky Peak and has received 4,750 pounds of native grass seed. Fifteen pounds of locally collected bluebunch wheatgrass seed is being increased by contract with private growers, and 60,000 shrub seedlings are in the growout phase. Vale administered three contracts with private growers who produced 800 pounds of seed in 2004. They also contracted two private collectors: one collected 187 pounds of grass seed and the other collected 144 pounds of bitterbrush seed. The District had nine other contracts in support of native plant materials. This year the District used 6,600 pounds of native seeds in five seedings in addition to using non-native seed in the mix. Vale District also planted 175 acres with shrub seedlings in 2004.

National Projects

BLM continues to work with the Native Seed Network to create on-line information for land managers to search for native species that are available from the private seed industry. The site documents sources of seed and provides links to industry representatives to learn how to purchase and plant the seed. In 2004, the website expanded to include information on NRCS cultivars and other important conservation species.

Other National Rehabilitation Projects

Approximately \$1,000,000 was directed to the USGS Landsat program to find a means of compensating for the data gaps that result from a failure of the instrument's scan line corrector. This program uses satellite imagery to map burn severity. Burn severity information assists rehabilitation specialists in determining where treatments are needed and to what extent those treatments are necessary to protect life and property.

Alaska Fire Rehabilitation

In 2004, the State of Alaska suffered its worst fire season since the 1950's. Over 700 fires burned over 6.6 million acres of public, state, and private lands. Land managers and resource specialists from state, federal, and Alaska Native organizations were invited to participate in several meetings to discuss assessment needed to determine the extent of damaged caused by the wildland fires. The agencies and organizations collaborated to share their specific organization's issues and concerns. A coordinated, interagency response plan was developed to mitigate impacts of the many fires.

The Department of the Interior dispatched one of its Type I Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Teams in the mid-September. Their primary objectives were to prescribe post-fire mitigation measures necessary to protect human life, property, and critical cultural and natural resources and to promptly mitigate the unacceptable effects of the fire and suppression impacts on lands within and adjacent to the burned area in accordance with management policy guidelines and all relevant federal regulations.

The BAER team worked steadily for three weeks prior to the onset of winter. During this time they were able to assess and write treatments on 4,796,811 acres. Mitigation treatments such as removal of hazard trees, clearing winter trails (transportation routes), weed management, cultural site protection, and stabilization of suppression impacts took place in the fall.

## **2005 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE ESTIMATES**

The Departments of Interior and Agriculture will be creating a national web site to provide information on the Burned Area Rehabilitation program as well as store and disseminate information as directed by the GAO. Monitoring reports and end-of-project summaries are required for all stabilization and rehabilitation projects. The FWS national website provides general information on the Burned Area Rehabilitation program as well as copies of all emergency stabilization and/or rehabilitations plans and several final accomplishment reports since 1998. The National Fire Plan Operations and reporting System (NFPORS) continues to be the primary data storage platform for tracking treatments and activities.

The DOI bureaus will continue to work cooperatively to develop monitoring protocols/methods to more accurately assess the effectiveness of wildland fire stabilization and rehabilitation treatments.

The BLM, FWS, NPS, and BIA are members of the National Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Coordinating Group. This group has drafted a new Interagency Emergency Stabilization Handbook as follow up guidance to the new Departmental Manual. The goal is to finalize this handbook and begin implementation of its use in 2005. In a parallel planning effort, the BLM is initiating a Supplemental Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Handbook which discuss BLM-specific activities not covered in the Interagency Handbook.

NPS and FWS will continue their support of the North Zone and South Zone National Type I Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Teams.

Within the Fire Planning Analysis initiative, the Burned Area Emergency Response module is scheduled for initiation in 2005. Subject matter experts in stabilization and rehabilitation will contribute time and experience to making the FPA system a quality product.

Historically, funds for infrastructure in the Rehabilitation program were paid by other programs including Fire Suppression. For the second year, Rehabilitation will cover many of its own infrastructure expenditures within the rehabilitation account.

### **Native Plant Materials Development**

The Native Plant Materials Development program will use \$4,600,000 for 72 projects in 2005. This will be the second transitional year of shifting from a short-term strategy to develop interagency native plant materials production capacity to a long-term program that can address supply and management of native plant materials. This shift will take place over a few years with continued collection of seed for native plant germplasm collections in cooperation with USDA and other partners. It also marks a shift from a program that focuses primarily on building capacity to one that expands on smaller programs that have been initiated in other fire-prone ecoregions. The change will be most notable in commercial seed production and wildland seed collection.



In 2005 the Gunnison Field Office is implementing a native forb and grass increase projects to restore degraded sagebrush communities and improve sage-grouse habitat. They are working in cooperation with the Gunnison National Forest to choose species and contract seed growout.

The Utah State Office is implementing a strategy to collect and increase seed for use in the Colorado Plateau Ecoregion. Seven grasses, two forbs, and several shrub species have been identified as priority species for production. They are coordinating with seven partnership groups and plan to develop an IDIQ contract to facilitate growout with local seed producers.



Aerial delivery of native seed allows for coverage of larger numbers of acres in more difficult terrain than with ground-based methods. Seeding during winter places seed on the ground when moisture is more readily available. Reseeding quickly after fire inhibits the establishment of noxious weeds, helps prevent erosion, and begins the process of restoring wildlife habitat.

#### **Alaska Fire Rehabilitation**

\$3,270,000 has been approved for expenditure in 2005 for the Alaska Fire Emergency Stabilization Plan and implementation. The Interagency Working Group will return in the spring of 2005 to finish the final assessments on approximately 1.6 million acres burned in 2004 and follow-up on the previous fall emergency stabilization treatments to ensure objectives are being met.

### **JUSTIFICATION OF 2006 PROGRAM CHANGES**

#### **2006 PROGRAM CHANGES**

	2006 Budget Request	Program Changes (+/-)
\$(000)	24,476	+ 337
FTE	44	+0

The 2006 budget request for the Burned Area Rehabilitation Program is \$24,487,000 and 44 FTE, a program increase of \$337,000 or 1.4% over the 2005 enacted level. This increase will help facilitate the development of the GAO suggested website for the dissemination of monitoring data. It will also help in offsetting expected increases in contract costs in 2006.

## Burned Area Rehabilitation Performance Summary

DOI Strategic Goal: Resource Protection							
End Outcome Goal: Improve the health of watersheds, landscapes, and marine resources that are DOI managed or influenced in a manner consistent with obligations regarding the allotment and use of water.							
Intermediate Outcome Goal 1: Restore and maintain proper function to watersheds and landscapes.							
Outcome Measures:	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Planned: Budget Just- ifications	2005 Planned: Revised Final	2006 Planned	Change in Perfor- mance (2005 : 2006)	2008 Long Term Target
Percent of acres degraded by wildland fire with post-fire rehabilitation treatments underway, completed, or monitored (SP: PIM.1.01.001)	<u>2,360,934</u> 7,357,000 = 32%	<u>827,045</u> 4,808,000 =17%	<u>1,520,00</u> 8,090,00 = 19%	20%	20%	0	20%
Average gross costs per acre for burned acres with emergency stabilization and rehabilitation.(\$ ) (10-Year Plan)	<u>\$39.27m</u> 2,360,934 = \$17	(\$20.9M+ \$17.1M)÷ 827,045 = \$46	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Primary Outputs funded by this subactivity:							
Apply Fire Rehabilitation Treatments (acres)	2,360,934	827,045	1,520,000 est.	1,347,000 (avg. 2001- 2004)	1,347,000 (avg. 2001- 2004)	0	1,347,000 (avg. 2001- 2004)
Acres degraded by wildland fire on DOI-managed land (NK) – sum of previous 3 years	6,212,000	4,808,000 (total 2001- 2003)	8,090,000 est.	6,634,000 (total 2002- 2004)	6,634,000 (total 2002- 2004)	0	6,634,000 (total 2002- 2004)

\* Actual obligations for 2002 and 2003, excluding NPMD funding.

**ACTIVITY: OTHER OPERATIONS**

**SUBACTIVITY: FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE**

**SUBACTIVITY SUMMARY (\$000)**

Subactivity		2004 Actual Amount	2005 Estimate Amount	Uncontrollable & Related Changes (+/-) Amount	Program Changes (+/-) Amount	2006 Budget Request Amount	Inc(+) / Dec(-) from 2005 Amount
Facilities	\$	12,224	12,202	0	-4,353	7,849	-4,353
All Bureau FTE	FTE	7	7	0	0	7	0
BLM	\$	8,446	3,355	0	+1,125	4,480	+1,125
	FTE	5	5			5	0
BIA	\$	1,694	3,338	0	-2,079	1,259	-2,079
	FTE	0	0			0	0
FWS	\$	835	2,718	0	-1,451	1,267	-1,451
	FTE	1	1			1	0
NPS	\$	1,249	2,791	0	-1,948	843	-1,948
	FTE	1	1			1	0

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**

This program funds the construction and maintenance of wildland fire facilities used by the Department of the Interior's Wildland Fire Management bureaus.

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

This subactivity supports the Serving Communities mission goal from the Department's Strategic Plan by providing protection of lives, resources and property from wildland fire. This is a critical investment to meet the Department's and the four Department of the Interior bureaus' missions to reduce threats to public health, safety, and property, and to restore and maintain health of the land.

The Wildland Fire Management program has developed a 5-Year Deferred Maintenance and Construction Plan. Each plan provides the projects of greatest need in priority order with focus first on critical health and safety and critical resource protection. The Department has undertaken an intense effort originating in the field to develop these lists.

An alphabetical list of 2006 projects with brief project descriptions, as well as a summary list showing the priority order of the 2006 projects is provided in the "Justification of 2006 Program Changes" section. That section also includes a summary list of all projects for the five-year period 2006–2010. The complete descriptions of 2006 projects as well as lists showing all projects planned for 2006–2010 are provided in a companion volume. Limited modifications to

the lists will occur as they are annually reviewed and updated, with the addition of a new fifth year, and submitted to the Congress.

Projects are ranked using seven different factors based on the percentage of cost associated with each of the relevant ranking categories. The plan presents the projects of greatest need in priority order, focusing first on critical health and safety, and second, on critical resource protection.

Successful implementation of the National Fire Plan requires the correction of critical health and safety-related facility problems as well as the installation of facilities that improve the suppression response capability required to keep fires small, and reduce the threat to structures, municipal watersheds, and wildlife habitat. With sufficient fire facilities and infrastructure, the program will be capable of maintaining a state of readiness, provide full support for suppression activities, and enhance fuels treatment capability.

Safe and properly maintained facilities are important for protecting firefighters and the equipment upon which they rely. Like other resource programs in Department of the Interior, the fire management program is repairing and upgrading facilities that are in deteriorating and unsafe condition. This situation is compounded by the need to accommodate the recent expansion of fire readiness personnel and equipment since the inception of the National Fire Plan. The WFM program has added over 1,000 firefighters and fuels specialists, over 25 aircraft, and dozens of engines and other heavy equipment under the National Fire Plan since 2000. Firefighters require and deserve up-to-date, safe quarters and operational facilities. New heavy equipment must be stored and protected from the elements, both to increase their useful life, and ensure that they are in top condition when needed to respond to fire emergencies. Facilities construction and maintenance funding enables the program to construct or repair fire stations, firefighter quarters, and other facilities for the expanded fire readiness personnel and resources. Buildings and facilities in disrepair will be brought up to current safety standards.

## 2004 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Department of the Interior used \$20.9 million, which included funds carried over from previous appropriations, to construct or repair 49 facilities in 15 States in 2004 as follows:

State	Number of Projects	Funding (\$000)
Alaska	3	8,223
Arizona	3	1,153
California	7	2,048
Colorado	2	2,382
Georgia	1	314
Idaho	11	1,142
Kansas	1	41
Montana	3	54
Nevada	7	2,251
Oregon	4	1,838
South Dakota	1	124
Tennessee	1	25
Texas	1	119

State	Number of Projects	Funding (\$000)
Utah	2	19
Wyoming	2	1,136
<b>Totals</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>20,869</b>

### 2005 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE ESTIMATES

Twenty-seven of the projects with the highest health, safety, and resource ratings costing \$12.2 million are included in the 2005 budget. This investment will help the Department meet its goals of reducing threats to public health, safety, and property; and restoring and maintaining the health of the land.

#### 2005 FIRE FACILITY DEFERRED MAINTENANCE AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Project	Bureau	State	Score	Cost	Rank
Anahuac NWR Fire Quarters	FWS	TX	350	449	18
Apple Valley Helibase	BLM	CA	955	953	1
Big Bend Dormitory	NPS	TX	100	451	27
Blackwater NWR Fire Quarters	FWS	MD	300	516	21
Canaveral Fire Cache	NPS	FL	350	305	20
Chapin Helibase and Operations Building	NPS	CO	425	205	12
Cheyenne River Warehouse	BIA	SD	350	427	15
Cheyenne-Arapaho Renovation	BIA	OK	250	32	26
Comanche Office & Engine Storage	BIA	OK	350	215	16
Emergency repairs and maintenance	all			750	
Flagstaff Area Fire Facility	NPS	AZ	300	329	25
Isle au Haut Fire Cache Rehabilitation	NPS	ME	850	280	4
J. Clark Salyer NWR Interagency Dispatch/Cache	FWS	ND	300	351	22
Jordan Fire Station	BLM	MT	870	1,896	3
Mescalero Modular Lookout Quarters	BIA	NM	790	324	6
Mescalero Replacement of Helitack Facility:	BIA	NM	475	280	9
Mescalero Warehouse	BIA	NM	440	627	11
Morris WMD Fire Cache	FWS	MN	300	162	24
Mt. Rainer Fire Facilities	NPS	WA	350	404	19
Okefenokee NWR Interagency Dispatch and Cache/Office	FWS	GA	537	350	8

Project	Bureau	State	Score	Cost	Rank
Salish & Kootenai Equipment Storage Building	BIA	MT	400	85	13
San Carlos IHC Program Building	BIA	AZ	825	860	5
Schoolhouse Peak Fire Tower Rehabilitation	NPS	CA	580	46	7
Sheldon NWR Vehicle Storage Office Cache	FWS	NV	300	722	23
Surprise Valley Fire Station	BLM	CA	930	300	2
Ute Mt., White Mesa Engine Garage	BIA	NM	350	62	17
Whiskytown Fire Cache Construction	NPS	CA	460	600	10
Winnebago Equipment Storage	BIA	NE	400	221	14
<b>TOTAL</b>				\$12,202	

## JUSTIFICATION OF 2006 PROGRAM CHANGES

### 2006 PROGRAM CHANGES

	2006 Budget Request	Program Changes (+/-)
\$(000)	7,849	-4,353
FTE	7	0

The FY2006 budget request for fire facilities is \$7,849,000 and 7 FTE, a net program decrease of \$4,353,000 from the 2005 enacted level. This funding level will enable the wildland fire management bureaus to address 12 urgent health and safety related projects, plus 3 facilities that are necessary to protect firefighting equipment from vandalism and weather damage.

### PROPOSED 2006 FIRE FACILITY DEFERRED MAINTENANCE AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Project	Bureau	State	Score	Cost	Rank
<b>Architectural and Engineering Design:</b> This funding is no more than 10% of the proposed line-item budget allocated for Wildland Fire Facilities construction or deferred maintenance projects. Each agency will receive a prorated portion of the A&E fund based on the percentage of funds allocated for each agency's projects. This provides out year funding for projects to complete the A&E work prior to the year of construction funding.	DOI		n.a.	143	16

Project	Bureau	State	Score	Cost	Rank
<b>Big Thicket Fire Management Office and Cache, Phase 1:</b> Build a 3,208 square foot, single level, concrete building to include four private offices, a reception and common work area, restroom facilities, fire cache, and engine storage. A gravel parking area for 15 vehicles is also included. Phase 1 will include the survey and design portion of the project.	NPS	TX	675	755	7
<b>Devils Lake Vehicle Storage/Office/Cache:</b> Construct a 2,400 square foot engine storage facility with four 15' x 30' engine bays and 650 square feet of fire cache and work space in a 30' x 80' Butler type building. This will replace the current facilities which will be flooded within 2 years and provide protection of equipment from the elements. Construction of this facility will maintain the District's operational efficiency and safety by preventing a significant increase in response times and reduction in equipment malfunction.	FWS	ND	650	225	9
<b>Dubois Fire Station:</b> Replace the mobile home currently used as the fire station in Dubois, Idaho with a standardized designed structure. The facility would be used by fire and fuels crews as well as resource specialists conducting field work. There are normally two engines and 10 people in the fire program stationed in Dubois. The project would also include an enclosed and heated garage for fire engines, support vehicles and supplies.	BLM	ID	810	1,000	5
<b>Lakeview Seat Base Improvements:</b> Remodel a Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT) base building and storage area at Lakeview. This will provide a secure and safe storage area which is rodent proof, insulated, with a new communication system for office area, a wash down containment area for aircraft, and furnishings for crew and vendor. The tarmac at the base in Lakeview, and the runway cracks at the secondary base located at Fort Rock Guard Station will be repaired.	BLM	OR	670	196	8
<b>Moab Fire Station and Crew Quarters:</b> Construction of a new standardized design fire station to house 14 seasonal employees, including a kitchen area capable of accommodating 25 people, 2 gender specific bathrooms, office space, and parking for 4 engines. Phase one will include all earthwork and construction. Phase 2 will include security fencing, landscaping, sidewalks, entrance road, and parking lot.	BLM	UT	860	800	6

Project	Bureau	State	Score	Cost	Rank
<b>Necedah Engine Storage Facility, Cache, and Office Phase 1:</b> Construction of a 5,000 square foot heated building (50 ft x 100 ft). Building would have 6 heated enclosed vehicle bays, office space for three individuals, bathroom facilities, shower stall, secure fire cache storage, maintenance area, personal gear lockers, stairway to mezzanine area and a lunch/meeting area. Phase 1 to include planning, site preparation, concrete work and exterior construction.	FWS	WI	960	476	1
<b>Olancha Fire Station, Phase 2:</b> Phase 2 of the Olancha Fire Facility construction. This phase will include the construction of a new 3,400 square foot living quarters/day use building, demolition of the old residence, site fencing, and asphalt and aggregate surfacing.	BLM	CA	955	1,004	2
<b>Pea Ridge Fire Cache:</b> Build a new dedicated fire cache/shop/vehicle housing to support and protect Type 6 Engine and other related fire supplies and equipment. The cache will consist of a two-bay add-on to an existing shop facility. Construction material will be of conventional steel truss with steel siding. The add-on will be approximately 30ft x 45ft, or 1300 square feet. A single toilet/shower/sink, two exterior walkout doors; and one interior door will be added to the existing building. A concrete slab and parking apron with lighting and security will be included.	NPS	AR	600	71	11
<b>Pocatello Fire Station #6:</b> Construct a new fire station facility to provide living quarters and office space for BLM fire personnel and out-of-district fire crews who are on the District. Facility must be large enough to sleep 15-20 people, with a kitchen area to cook and feed 25 personnel at once, 2 gender-specific bathrooms with enough facilities to accommodate 15 people, living room space adequate for 15 people, and office spaces large enough for 3 people--each including desks and cabinets, etc. Also included are chain link security fence, parking for 4 fire engines 2 support vehicles and 15 personal vehicles, and engine refill capabilities along with covered vehicle parking for 8-10 vehicles.	BLM	ID	810	1,000	4



Project	Bureau	State	Score	Cost	Rank
<b>Ramah Navajo Fire Management Building, Phase 2:</b> Replace an existing building with a facility of approximately 2,600 sq. ft. The facility would be constructed of concrete block and metal. This new facility would replace an old structure that is in poor condition and does not meet OSHA standards. The new facility would provide office space for personnel that provide the administration and management of the wildland fire management program. The second phase completes construction of the building.	BIA	NM	430	300	12
<b>Ruby Mountain Interagency Hotshot Crew Operations Building, Phase 1:</b> Construction of the residential facilities, operations/administrative work space, and support structures for the Ruby Mountain Interagency Hotshot Crew. The residential facility will utilize an expanded version of the Bureau of Land Management's standardized design for a fire station (crew quarters) to accommodate a 22-person hand crew. An additional operations/ administration building will be needed to support the fire cache, tool room, office, physical fitness training area, and a briefing/training room. Additional support structures include a flammable storage building, employee parking area, security fencing, and lighting. Phase 1 will include the building design and site preparation.	BLM	NV	600	400	10
<b>San Bernard Engine Storage Office/Cache, Phase 1:</b> Replace building to support the need for equipment storage and personnel with 3 heated, enclosed bays; a fire equipment cache; an office facility for fire staff; and 2 restroom facilities with showers and change area. The building frame proposed will be the Butler type, with interior partitions to provide separate areas for cache, offices, and restroom facilities. Phase 1 will include planning, site preparation and exterior construction.	FWS	TX	895	550	3
<b>Sisseton Equipment Storage, Fire Cache, and Engine Storage:</b> Construction of a new 1,800 sq. ft. building to provide for wildland engine and equipment storage. The protection of equipment from weather and vandalism is critical in this climate and location. There are currently no facilities to store wildland engines.	BIA	SD	100	219	15
<b>Southern Pueblos Agency Communication Facility:</b> New construction of approximately 160 sq. ft. for communications equipment such as repeaters and batteries to run the equipment. This structure is located in a remote location. At this time the equipment is located outside and is susceptible to vandalism and weather elements.	BIA	NM	100	26	14

Project	Bureau	State	Score	Cost	Rank
<b>Uintah and Ouray Storage, Fire Cache, and Engine Storage:</b> Construction of a new 4,000 sq. ft. facility to store wildland fire equipment that must be protected from weather and vandalism. This is a large warehouse and wildland engine storage area that is heated to ensure the readiness of wildland engines and equipment.	BIA	UT	100	684	13
<b>TOTAL</b>				7,849	

Each of the above projects is described in a detailed project data sheet contained in the five-year deferred maintenance and capital improvement plan that will be provided to the Congress as a separate document.

### Performance Summary

Intermediate Outcome Measures:	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Planned	2006 Proposed	Change in Performance (2005 : 2006)	2009 Long Term Target
Fire facilities under construction, reconstruction, or maintenance. (#)	78	49	27	15	-12	21

<b>ACTIVITY: OTHER OPERATIONS</b> <b>SUBACTIVITY: JOINT FIRE SCIENCE PROGRAM</b>
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**SUBACTIVITY SUMMARY (\$000)**

Subactivity	2004 Actual Amount	2005 Estimate Amount	Uncontrollable & Related Changes (+/-) Amount	Program Changes (+/-) Amount	2006 Budget Request Amount	Inc(+) / Dec(-) from 2005 Amount
Joint Fire Science    \$	7,901	7,889	0	-1,889	6,000	-1,889
<i>All Bureau FTE    FTE</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>0</i>

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP) was established in the FY 1998 appropriation for Interior and Related Agencies. The program is a six agency partnership, including the USDA Forest Service and five Interior bureaus: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey. The program is managed by an appointed, 10-person Governing Board including five from the USDA Forest Service and one from each of the Interior bureaus. Day-to-day activities are conducted on behalf of the Governing Board by a program office staff located at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho. The staff includes a program manager, program assistant, and a fire technology transfer specialist.

The JFSP original direction consisted of four principal purposes: fuels inventory and mapping; evaluation of fuels treatments; scheduling of fuels treatments; and monitoring and stabilization. Subsequent guidance in 2001 added emphasis on post-fire stabilization and monitoring; aircraft-based remote sensing; rapid response projects to capture time-sensitive data; active or recent wildland fires or post-fire rehabilitation projects; local research needs; and increased emphasis on technology transfer.

The JFSP provides funding for applied research for wildland fuels and fire. For example, little is known about the effects of various fuels management activities on certain invasive plants, soil impacts, and related effects on the environment. These questions need to be answered in order to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and similar statutes.

An example of recent JFSP-funded work is development of the Northwest Fire Research Clearinghouse (FIREHouse). FIREHouse is a web-based project providing data and documentation on fire science and technology relevant to Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. FIREHouse is providing "one-stop shopping" for resource managers, decision makers, scientists, students, and others who want access to the results of research efforts to better understand and manage fire and fuels on public lands. FIREHouse is a collaborative project between the Fire and Environmental Research Applications Team (FERA) of the USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station, Pacific Wildland Fire Sciences Laboratory; the

University of Washington; the North Cascades National Park; and the National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII).

### **The Dry-Forest Fire-Fire Surrogate project, “Hungry Bob”**

For decades, land managers have altered forest structure through prescribed fire and fire surrogate treatments such as thinning. Although these practices are common, scientific knowledge on their costs and ecological consequences is limited. In addition, the efficacy of treatments for reducing wildland fire hazard is not well known across different fuel types.

A large-scale coordinated effort to quantify the costs and effects of fire and fire surrogate treatments is underway on 13 sites across the United States. Ecosystems chosen for inclusion in this study are those known to have historically short fire return intervals. Treatments and measurements used in this study are rigorous and consistent across study areas. This unique approach will allow comparisons not only within sites but also across sites.

Study sites are located in Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Montana, Florida, Ohio, South Carolina, Alabama, and North Carolina. Treatments include 1) mechanical treatment alone; 2) prescribed fire alone; 3) mechanical plus fire; and 4) untreated control. More than 50 important variables are being measured and analyzed, representing seven major disciplines: vegetation, fuels and fire behavior, soils and the forest floor, wildlife, entomology, pathology, and economics. As part of the study, USGS researchers at the Western Ecological Research Center will assess fuel-reducing treatments in a 5-year study at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks to determine the ecosystem impacts of different fire regimes used to reduce fire hazard.

This collaborative effort involves more than 105 scientists and 50 managers at local, regional, and national scales. Participant organizations include the Forest Service, National Park Service, 12 universities in 10 States, five State forestry departments, and three non-governmental organizations. These partnerships have helped to improve study design, implement treatments, analyze data, and enhance technology transfer efforts.

Results from this study will help land managers and a wide variety of specialists plan and implement appropriate land and fuels management treatments. It is expected that the project will show effects of fire and other treatments on vegetation and animal populations and why native plant communities have been replaced by invasives such as cheatgrass.

The JFSP estimates that, by 2006, about 150 research deliverables will have been completed and handed off to field units for implementation. A variety of technology transfer mechanisms are used to ensure that science deliverables are made available to managers and the general public, including web sites, publications, and conference proceedings. Managers can find science deliverables and links to other fire and fuels information web sites at the JFSP web site:

<http://jfsp.nifc.gov/>. These science activities will help ensure rapid implementation of wildland fire and fuel projects by providing best available science to support the activities.

Researchers and managers supported by the JFSP have communicated JFSP project results through 150 published papers, 140 field trips with managers, participation in 147 workshops or symposia, 103 training sessions, and the development of 39 web pages for posting current and relevant project information by the end of 2004.

## 2004 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2004, the JFSP posted four Announcements for Proposals (AFPs) with 6 separate Task Statements. In response to the four AFPs, the JFSP received 178 proposals. Following independent, external peer review, the Board selected and awarded 43 projects. Most of the projects are three-year projects, scheduled for completion in 2007. The 2004 JFSP annual Business Summary, in press, will include a summary of each of the 2004 projects.

The JFSP, along with partners in National Fire Plan Research and Forest Service Research, hosted a Science Delivery and Applications Workshop in May to: 1) assess the state of wildland fire and fuels technology transfer and adoption, 2) determine how to provide leadership in science delivery and application, and 3) determine how to improve the effectiveness of technology transfer efforts in an interagency context. This workshop resulted in the creation of a white paper that charted a course for effective and coordinated science and technology transfer efforts.

Finally, the JFSP conducted its annual Principal Investigator Workshop to obtain progress reports from each active, JFSP-funded project, provide a forum for interaction between managers and scientists, provide a forum for resolving issues and discrepancies among linked or sequential projects, and provide a networking opportunity for scientists and managers working on related issues.

## 2005 PLANNED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

	2004 actual	2005 Plan	2005 Plan vs 2004 actual
Fire Research projects initiated*	43	40	-3

In October 2004 the JFSP posted four new Announcements for Proposals. These closed on December 15. The JFSP received 207 proposals. Peer review panels will be conducted in late January and early February 2005. The Governing Board will meet in mid-March 2005 to review proposals and peer review comments, and select proposals for funding. The JFSP expect to fund approximately 40 to 50 new projects. This will increase the number of completed projects or projects in progress, since inception of the JFSP, to about 325 projects.

The program staff and Governing Board will make field visits of selected JFSP research sites to discuss research projects first hand, gain an understanding and appreciation for research and

management issues and concerns, and transfer emerging technology to users. Two or three investigation sites will be visited this year. These field visits underscore the Governing Board's commitment to transfer scientific knowledge to managers.

## JUSTIFICATION OF 2006 PROGRAM CHANGES

### 2006 PROGRAM CHANGES

	2006 Budget Request	Program Changes (+/-)
\$(000)	6,000	-1,889
FTE	4	0

Funding for the Joint Fire Science Program will be reduced to \$6 million from the FY 2005 level of \$8 million, a decrease of 24 percent. This program reduction will enable the Department to place resources in higher priority areas: fire readiness, suppression operations, and hazardous fuels reduction, while still maintaining a viable fire research program. The combined Forest Service and Interior funding for JFSP of \$14.0 million will enable the JFSP to award and support fire research projects of greatest importance to Federal land management.

The JFSP will likely post four Announcements for Proposals in October 2005. The JFSP Governing Board will meet in March 2006 to review research proposals and peer-review panel recommendations to make funding decisions. The Governing Board expects to fund between 35 and 40 of the highest priority projects, a reduction of 4 to 8 compared with previous fiscal years. After project selection in 2006, approximately 360 projects will have been funded through JFSP since its inception.

Selected projects will continue to be those which will address questions for public land managers regarding the effects of fire and treatments on-the-ground. The JFSP is able to make selections of projects based upon the needs of the Bureaus for research in biomes they manage. Research conducted at privately run research centers or universities is sometimes limited to the biomes near them. Since the DOI manages a vast landscape with many biomes, it is more scientifically defensible to conduct research in the specific biomes being managed. The JFSP will continue to fund and work collaboratively with universities who apply for grants, where the proposed research is deemed to be applicable to public lands. The JFSP provides managers with the necessary research and data to enable them to make good land management decisions through applied research directly related to their resources.

**ACTIVITY: OTHER OPERATIONS**  
**SUBACTIVITY: RURAL FIRE ASSISTANCE**

**SUBACTIVITY SUMMARY (\$000)**

Subactivity		2004 Actual Amount	2005 Estimate Amount	Uncontrollable & Related Changes (+/-) Amount	Program Changes (+/-) Amount	2006 Budget Request Amount	Inc(+) / Dec(-) from 2004 Amount
Rural Fire Assistance	\$	9,877	9,861	0	-9,861	0	-9,861
	FTE	0	0	0	0	0	0
BLM	\$	5,896	5,887	0	-5,887	0	-5,887
BIA	\$	1,225	1,223	0	-1,223	0	-1,223
FWS	\$	1,225	1,223	0	-1,223	0	-1,223
NPS	\$	1,531	1,528	0	-1,528	0	-1,528

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The Rural Fire Assistance (RFA) program was authorized in the *FY 2001 Interior Appropriations Act, P.L. 106-291*, and appropriated \$10 million. Initiated as a pilot effort to augment rural fire department (RFD) firefighter safety and wildland fire protection capabilities, the Department of the Interior has trained over 12,000 firefighters and purchased more than \$4.5 million of personal protective equipment on a cost-shared basis. The Wildland Fire Management bureaus have participated with rural and volunteer fire departments in over 4,000 reciprocal fire protection agreements since 2001. In turn, the RFD's have provided vital fire support that benefits resources on DOI-managed lands.

Community involvement is a key element in reducing fire hazards near communities and in restoring damaged landscapes. Community assistance programs focus on building community capacity to develop and carry out citizen-driven solutions that will lessen community vulnerability to risks associated with wildland fire. Wildland urban interface areas exist wherever homes, businesses, and other structures are built among trees, brush, and other combustible vegetation. There are WUI communities throughout the U.S. in both rural locations and in urban areas. Fires move from forest, brush, or grassland into communities or from communities into adjacent wildland. Rural fire departments are often the first line of defense against unwanted wildland fire. DOI bureaus provide technical and financial support to procure equipment and training and to implement prevention activities within wildland urban interface (WUI) communities. The program is focused on improving wildland fire preparedness and prevention capacity for those communities. Grants may only be used for basic wildland fire safety equipment and tools, communication devices, wildland fire training, and community wildfire prevention and education activities. The RFA program does not fund structural equipment, or water systems funded by FEMA grants.

## 2004 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Congress appropriated \$9.9 million in 2004 for the RFA program. Grants were awarded to over 1,400 rural fire departments providing technical assistance, training, supplies, equipment, and public education support, thus enhancing firefighter safety and strengthening wildland fire protection capabilities. RFA funds are matched on a 90/10 split. Recipients must contribute a minimum of 10 percent in dollars or in-kind services and are party to a cooperative fire agreement or reciprocal fire protection agreement.

### RFA Resources Provided To Rural Fire Departments, 2001-2004

	2001	2002	2003	2004 est.	Total
<b>Purchase Category</b>	<b>Number of Units</b>				
Personal Protective Equipment	24,210	29,828	26,137	25,500	<b>105,675</b>
Communication Equipment	1,196	1,473	1,291	1,259	<b>5,219</b>
Hand Tools	26,900	33,142	29,041	28,333	<b>117,416</b>
Water Handling Equipment	8,070	9,943	8,712	8,500	<b>35,225</b>
Number of Firefighters Trained	2,890	3,136	3,184	3,200	<b>12,410</b>
Engines Sold to RFD's	12	12	12	12	<b>48</b>
Workshops	361	392	398	320	<b>1,471</b>
Special Prevention Events	173	188	191	180	<b>732</b>

The 2004 data is preliminary and will be updated when final numbers are available.

## 2005 PLANNED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

DOI received \$9.9 million in 2005 for the RFA program. Through cost-sharing, the program will continue to leverage funding for equipment, training, and fire prevention programs for RFDs. In 2005, major accomplishments will include:

- Cooperating with nearly 4,000 rural and volunteer fire departments for delivery of wildland fire protection across land boundaries through cooperative or reciprocal fire assistance agreements.
- Providing financial assistance grants to 1,400 rural and volunteer fire departments.
- Providing a mechanism for coordinating and tracking the allocation of rural fire assistance funds by various agencies.
- The RFA program will be more closely integrated with the Forest Service State and Volunteer Assistance and the FEMA fire assistance grant programs, under the auspices of the Wildland Fire Leadership Council.

## JUSTIFICATION OF 2006 PROGRAM CHANGES

<b>Rural Fire Assistance</b>	<b>2006 Budget Request</b>	<b>Program Changes (+/-)</b>
\$(000)	0	-9,861
FTE	0	0



The FY 2006 budget request for the RFA program is \$0, and 0 FTE, a net program decrease of \$9.9 million from FY 2005. Funding will be reallocated within the WFM appropriation to support the most important priorities - wildland fire preparedness, fire suppression funding, and hazardous fuels reduction. This proposal will eliminate the Rural Fire Assistance grants program in order to avoid overlap with USDA and FEMA fire assistance programs.

Direct assistance to communities will be delivered through firefighter training to be provided to rural fire departments in communities near DOI-managed land. The Department is proposing an increase of \$1.9 million in the Preparedness activity to establish an effort to begin the development of a ready reserve of local firefighters who will be trained to become qualified for extended attack. This proposal is discussed in the Preparedness section of the budget request.

DOI will cooperate with the Forest Service and FEMA to ensure that rural fire departments in proximity to DOI-managed lands will continue to have access to Federal funding for traditional wildland firefighting financial and technical assistance.

#### PROGRAM PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

<b>Primary Outputs funded by this subactivity:</b>	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Planned	2006 Proposed	Change in Performance (2004 : 2005)	2008 Long Term Target
Fire education and prevention programs completed. (NK)	100	100	100	0	-100	0
Rural fire departments receiving financial assistance. (NK)	1,592	1,460*	1,400	0	-1,400	0

\* Preliminary data

## Budget Schedules

### PROGRAM AND FINANCING (MILLION \$)

	Identification code: 14-112500-0-R-200403	2004 Act	2005 CY	2006 BY
	Program and Financing (P)			
	Obligations by program activity			
0001	Preparedness (Readiness, Facilities, and Fire Science)	315	286	286
0004	Fire Suppression Operations	281	256	233
0006	Hazardous Fuels Reduction	195	203	212
0008	Burned Area Rehabilitation	19	27	25
0009	Rural Fire Assistance	10	10	0
0901	Fire Reimbursable	10	23	23
1000	Total new obligations	830	805	779
	Budgetary resources available for obligation			
2140	Unobligated balance carried forward, start of year	115	92	188
2200	New budget authority (gross)	781	861	787
2210	Resources available from recoveries of prior year obligations	26	40	40
2390	Total budgetary resources available for obligation	922	993	1,015
2395	Total new obligations	-830	-805	-779
2440	Unobligated balance carried forward, end of year	92	188	236
	New budget authority (gross), detail			
	Discretionary			
4000	Appropriation	893	843	757
4035	Appropriation permanently reduced	-10	-12	0
4100	Transferred to other accounts [14-1039]	-52	0	0
4100	Transferred to other accounts [14-1110]	-4	0	0
4100	Transferred to other accounts [14-1612]	-12	0	0
4100	Transferred to other accounts [14-2301]	-35	0	0
4100	Transferred to other accounts [14-5020]	-11	0	0
4100	Transferred to other accounts [14-5033]	-3	0	0
4100	Transferred to other accounts [14-5035]	-16	0	0
4200	Transferred from other accounts [12-1115]	8	0	0
4300	Appropriation (total discretionary)	758	831	757
	Spending authority from offsetting collections			
	Discretionary			
6800	Offsetting collections (cash)	17	30	30
6810	Change in uncollected customer payments from Federal sources	6	0	0
6890	Spending authority from offsetting collections (total discretionary)	23	30	30
7000	Total new budget authority (gross)	781	861	787
	Change in obligated balances			
7240	Obligated balance, start of year	304	274	335
7310	Total new obligations	830	805	779
7320	Total outlays (gross)	-828	-704	-811
7345	Recoveries of prior year obligations	-26	-40	-40
7400	Change in uncollected customer payments from Federal sources (unexpired)	-6	0	0
7440	Obligated balance, end of year	274	335	263
	Outlays (gross), detail			
8690	Outlays from new discretionary authority	452	587	537

## Budget Schedules

### PROGRAM AND FINANCING (MILLION \$)

Identification code: 14-112500-0-R-200403		2004 Act	2005 CY	2006 BY
8693	Outlays from discretionary balances	376	117	274
8700	Total outlays (gross)	828	704	811
	Offsetting collections (cash) from			
8800	Federal sources	0	30	30
8840	Non-Federal sources	17	0	0
8890	Total, offsetting collections (cash)	17	30	30
	Against gross budget authority only			
8895	Change in uncollected customer payments from Federal sources	6	0	0
	Net budget authority and outlays			
8900	Budget authority	758	831	757
9000	Outlays	812	674	781

### OBJECT CLASSIFICATION (MILLION \$)

Identification code: 14-112500-0-R-200403		2004 Act	2005 CY	2006 BY
	Direct obligations			
1111	Full-time permanent	166	159	163
1113	Other than full-time permanent	28	27	27
1115	Other personnel compensation	67	64	66
1118	Special personal services payments	39	38	39
1119	Total personnel compensation	300	288	295
1121	Civilian personnel benefits	70	68	70
1210	Travel and transportation of persons	25	23	23
1220	Transportation of things	12	11	10
1232	Rental payments to others	3	3	2
1233	Communications, utilities, and miscellaneous charges	13	13	12
1251	Advisory and assistance services	6	6	5
1252	Other services	169	160	155
1253	Other purchases of goods and services from Government accounts	55	52	48
1254	Operation and maintenance of facilities	2	2	2
1255	Research and development contracts	3	3	3
1257	Operation and maintenance of equipment	6	6	5
1260	Supplies and materials	51	48	45
1310	Equipment	18	16	16
1320	Land and structures	19	19	18
1410	Grants, subsidies, and contributions	63	59	42
1990	Subtotal, obligations, Direct obligations	830	805	779

### PERSONNEL SUMMARY (FTEs)

Identification code: 14-112500-0-R-200403		2004 Act	2005 CY	2006 BY
	Direct			
1001	Civilian full-time equivalent employment	2,741	2,607	2,607
	Reimbursable			
2001	Civilian full-time equivalent employment	69	69	69
	Allocations to other accounts	[2,073]	[1,983]	[1,983]

